Human papillomavirus (HPV) is the most common sexually transmitted infection and is a leading etiology for cancer. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends routine vaccination of males and females aged 11–26 years. Studies suggest that U.S. military service members have higher HPV incidence rates and lower vaccination rates compared to the national average. Although the U.S. military enforces many recommended vaccines, the HPV vaccine fails to make the list.

**AT A GLANCE**

- Military healthcare leaders and policymakers can use research findings and evidence-based practice to increase HPV vaccine compliance among their beneficiaries.
- HPV vaccine uptake strategies include policy reform, process guidelines, educational strategies, and mandates.
- An updated U.S. military policy could include the most recent ACIP guidelines on the HPV vaccine and provide guidance about increased avenues for vaccine availability to service members.

**Human Papillomavirus Incidence and Vaccine Uptake in the U.S. Military**

Studies show high STI prevalence in the U.S. military, and STIs are one of the leading reportable medical events (Goyal, Mattocks, & Sadler, 2012; Shah et al., 2001). Young people (aged 15–24 years) account for half of all new HPV cases (CDC, 2016a), and 42% of U.S. military personnel are aged 18-26 years (Defense Manpower Research, 2017). Higher HPV infection rates exist in the U.S. military than in civilian counterparts (Goyal et al., 2012; Masel et al., 2015). In a study of female Marine Corps recruits (N = 1,841) who were screened for chlamydia, gonorrhea, and trichomoniasis on entry to the military, 14% tested positive for an STI compared to 8% of similar-aged women in the general population (Boyer, Pollack, Becnel, & Shafer, 2008). Because most STIs have few symptoms and are not associated with severe morbidity or decreased combat capability, STIs are not viewed as military healthcare priorities (Goyal et al., 2012).

An updated U.S. military policy could include the most recent ACIP guidelines on the HPV vaccine and provide guidance about increased avenues for vaccine availability to service members.