

CANCER NOTES



"Joining forces for cancer control in Virginia"

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Special points of interest:

- Men learn more about prostate health at discussion forums.
- Tips on how to protect yourself from skin cancer.
- Cancer death rates decline in Virginia.
- 2003 state cancer incidence data now available online.
- EWL conducts pilot project to screen eligible women for colon cancer.
- CPAC & VDH busy working on new state plan for 2008-2012.
- CPAC task force develops statewide objectives to address colorectal cancer.
- New look and logo for CPAC!

CCC FUNDS FORUMS ON PROSTATE CANCER



Through special funding appropriated by the state General Assembly, the Comprehensive Cancer Control Project (CCC) awarded mini-grants to four organizations—Richmond Medical Society, Portsmouth Cancer Task Force, Southside Health District, and the Virginia Prostate Cancer Coalition—to hold community-based prostate cancer information forums in areas with high morbidity and mortality rates. CCC worked with each group to develop culturally appropriate and community tailored events.

Five forums were held in June. Over 230 people attended, including middle-aged men eligible for screening. The event's objectives were to educate participants about prostate health and the importance of early detection, help men

develop strategies for effectively communicating with physicians about prostate health, and encourage community involvement in addressing prostate health. Lively discussions were held between audience members, urologists, registered dietitians, medical oncologists, and cancer survivors. Evaluation findings indicate the majority of participants learned more about signs and symptoms of prostate cancer, and 84 percent said that they were likely to bring up the issue of prostate health at their next doctor's visit.

The sixth, and final, seminar is being held in September in Warrenton and will be hosted by the Virginia Prostate Cancer Coalition in partnership with Fauquier Hospital.

STATE CHRONIC DISEASE DATA REPORT RELEASED

The Division of Chronic Disease Prevention and Control (DCDPC) has released the 2006 edition of "Chronic Disease in Virginia", a 98-page report that examines the prevalence, morbidity and mortality associated with major chronic diseases, including cancer, and related risk factors in Virginia. New additions to the report include health district-level data on select health indicators and sections on asthma and on health outcomes affecting people with disabilities. Some key findings:

- Cancer death rates declined by eight

percent, from 212.8 in 1999 to 195.7 per 100,000 in 2003.

- Virginia is meeting Healthy People 2010 objectives for mammography (breast cancer) and colon cancer screening.
- From 1994 to 2003, rates of adult cigarette smoking declined by 22 percent, from 25.3 percent to 21.9 percent.

For a copy of the full report, go to: <http://www.vahealth.org/cdpc/> and click on "2006 Comprehensive Chronic Disease Data Report".

SUN SAFETY

Summer is a great time to have fun outdoors. It's also a time to take precautions to avoid sunburns, which can increase your risk of skin cancer. Exposure to the sun's ultraviolet rays appears to be the most important factor in the development of skin cancer. When sun-protection methods are used consistently, skin cancer is largely preventable.

Melanoma, the most serious form of skin cancer, accounts for 78 percent of all skin cancer deaths in the United States. In 2003, there were 1,170 cases of melanoma in Virginia. According to a 2004 health behaviors study, 35 percent of adults said that they had experienced sunburn in the past twelve months, and among those who reported sunburn, 34 percent had three or more burns in the past year (Source: Virginia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2005).

Studies have shown that skin cancer is largely preventable when sun-protective practices are consistently employed. Be smart when you are out in the sun. *Choose Your Cover.*

- **Seek shade**, especially during midday hours (10 am to 4 pm);
- **Cover up** with clothing to protect exposed skin;
- **Get a hat** with a wide brim to protect your face, head, ears and neck;
- **Grab shades** that wrap around and protect against UVA & UVB rays;
- **Rub on sunscreen** with a SPF 15 or higher and protects against both UVA & UVB rays.

For information on skin cancer prevention, visit the following web sites:

Virginia Department of Health
(<http://www.vahealth.org/sunsafety/>)

CDC (<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/skin/>)

American Cancer Society Sun Safety Quiz (<http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/>)



CANCER INCIDENCE DATA ON THE WEB

The Virginia Cancer Registry (VCR) recently made significant updates to the data available on its web site. Cancer incidence data for the years 1999 – 2003 are now available online. The data cover all cancers reported to the VCR for this period, and it is presented in multiple breakouts. In addition to tables that summarize all cancers in the state, individual tables present counts and age-adjusted incidence rates for the 23 major cancer sites, including sex-specific sites (e.g., ovarian cancer). Breakouts by age group, by race, by sex, and by city or county of residence are posted on the site. Information on the number of cases

diagnosed by stage of disease is also presented.

In addition to the data tables, for the first time VCR prepared charts that provide a visual representation of the cancer surveillance data. One chart in particular, "Percent Distribution of Cancer Cases by Age Group, Virginia, 1999 – 2003", graphically demonstrates the fact that the burden of cancer increases with advancing age. Other charts show trends in cancer incidence for the five year period. The VCR web address is <http://www.vahealth.org/cdpc/cancer/>.

NEWS FROM THE CANCER PLAN ACTION COALITION (CPAC)



Virginia's Cancer Plan Action Coalition (CPAC) worked diligently this year to provide input for development of the 2008-2012 *Virginia Cancer Plan* (VCP). As part of work groups, CPAC coalition members met to discuss needs as well as develop goals and objectives with respect to certain aspects of cancer control. Sections of the cancer plan focus on prevention, early detection, treatment, survivorship and palliative care, surveillance, and health equality and disparities. The CPAC Advisory Board, which formed in 2006, also provided input on the goals, objectives and strategies.

A Fall launch date for the VCP is

expected. The next steps for CPAC will be to identify and implement priority recommendations from the 2008-2012 VCP. In addition to the new cancer plan, CPAC has created a cancer resource guide, completed a data needs assessment in surveillance, developed an educational program on colorectal and prostate cancers for rural physicians, and coordinated a panel of experts to address cancer at the Virginia Community Health Care Association conference, held May 10, 2007. In collaboration with INOVA Health System, CPAC has applied for a Lance Armstrong Foundation grant

(continued on next page)

EVERY WOMAN'S LIFE EXPANDS SCREENING PROGRAM



State Funds to Serve Women Ages 18-44

Effective July 1, 2006, Governor Tim Kaine and the state General Assembly earmarked over \$400,000 for each year of the 2006-2008 biennium to expand the *Every Woman's Life* (EWL) program. This expansion allowed EWL to screen an additional 1,100 women ages 18-44 in its last grant year (June 30, 2006 to June 29, 2007). As of early June 2007, EWL diagnosed 40 cases of pre-cancerous cervical conditions, one case of invasive cervical cancer, and 21 cases of breast cancer among these women. During FY 2007, a total of 6,974 screenings for women under age 65 occurred using both state and federal funds.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ ◆ EWL Screens for Colorectal Cancer

In July 2006, the Virginia Department of Health approved and allocated \$60,000 in special funds to conduct a pilot colorectal cancer (CRC) screening

project for under- and uninsured women ages 50 to 64 years, who are enrolled in the EWL program (priority is given to minority women). Three sites—Riverside Health System of Newport News, Crossover Health Center of Richmond, and OB/GYN Physicians of Franklin—were selected based on evidence of having higher CRC incidence and mortality rates in their areas. Eighty-four women received fecal immunochemical tests (FITs). Eight women had abnormal test findings and were referred for colonoscopy. There were no reported cases of colorectal cancer. With a small increase in funding for 2007-2008, EWL will continue to screen more women for colorectal cancer.



**Comprehensive
Cancer Prevention
and Control Project**

Division of Chronic Disease Prevention and Control
www.vdh.virginia.gov



**Virginia Department of
Health
Comprehensive Cancer
Control Project**

109 Governor Street
10th Floor
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Phone: (804) 864-7877
FAX: (804) 864-7880



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Program Manager:
Theresa Teekah

Editor: Gail Jennings

Contributors:

Beth Ehrensberger, Erika
Jones-Haskins, Jim Mar-
tin, Nila Saliba, Theresa
Teekah

This publication is avail-
able to state and local
partners, health districts,
and healthcare providers
interested in preventing
and controlling cancer in
Virginia. If you have a
story to share about your
organization or commu-
nity, please contact us.

CPAC NEWS (CONT'D.)

to conduct focus groups on survivor-
ship.

Two ad hoc CPAC committees also
have been busy this year. The Colorectal
Cancer Task Force, led by Dr. Resa
Jones of the Virginia Commonwealth
University, is moving forward on setting
and implementing priority goals and
objectives that originated from the 2006
Virginia Dialogue for Action Leadership
Summit.

The Marketing Committee updated
CPAC's logo and designed new letter-
head stationery, a banner, post-it notes,
and a "Cancer Is Non-Partisan" pin that
made its debut at an American Cancer
Society reception for the General As-
sembly last spring.

Other past year accomplishments
include CPAC partnering with the Vir-

ginia Department of Health, the Ap-
palachian Community Cancer Net-
work (ACCN), and NCI's Cancer In-
formation Service (CIS) to present a
free training on using evidence-based
programs. CPAC membership meet-
ings were video-conferenced to three
or four sites around Virginia. The
quarterly meetings featured guest
speakers, including Margo Michaels,
executive director of the Education
Network for the Advancement of
Cancer Clinical Trials, and members
of universities and non-profit com-
munity organizations from the Tide-
water area describing research and
initiatives involving outreach to mi-
norities.

