

# CANCER NOTES



*"Joining forces for cancer control in Virginia"*

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## Special points of interest:

- Funds appropriated for a prostate cancer awareness program
- Researcher presents cancer data on Appalachian region
- Virginia Cancer Registry data now available in ACS regional report
- Crater Health District women benefit from local breast health event
- *QuitNow Virginia* celebrates first anniversary
- EWL obtains state funding to expand breast and cervical cancer screening to women in need

## VIRGINIA COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CONTROL PROJECT



Prostate Cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in men in Virginia. Most cases of prostate cancer occur in men 50 and older. The risk of getting prostate cancer increases with age, and if a first degree relative such as a father or brother has been diagnosed with prostate cancer.

In response to the appropriation of \$50,000 from the state general fund for a Prostate Cancer Awareness Program, the Comprehensive Cancer Prevention and Control Project has formed a Prostate Cancer Task Force to implement an awareness program. Based on data, the

task force will help the project select a locality to target for a prostate cancer awareness program.

Although, there is some controversy regarding prostate cancer screening protocols among medical experts, the best defense against prostate cancer is early detection (e.g., PSA test). When a man understands the nature and risks of prostate cancer and the risks, benefits, and alternatives to screening, he is able to make a decision consistent with his own preferences and values.

## NEWS FROM THE CANCER PLAN ACTION COALITION (CPAC)



Virginia's Cancer Plan Action Coalition (CPAC) held its quarterly meeting in September at Johnson Memorial in Abingdon, with remote videoconferencing sites in Richmond and Fredericksburg. The program focused on cancer efforts and community networking in Southwest Virginia.

Mark Dignan, PhD, Director of the Prevention Research Center, University of Kentucky Markey Cancer Center, and co-principal investigator for the Appalachian Community Cancer Network (ACCN), discussed cancer health disparities and related factors. ACCN's goal is to reduce cancer disparities in Appalachia through education, research, and training and to increase community in-

volvement in cancer issues at the local level.

Due to higher than expected rates, ACCN projects focus on colorectal, cervical, and lung cancers. Dr. Dignan noted that these disparities may be due to a lack or an inability of the health-care system to function well. Dignan mentioned that one obstacle is a lack of data for Appalachian Virginia.

ACCN projects include:

- Screening,
- Education, especially smoking among youth,
- Research, especially increasing participation in clinical trials, and
- Training of researchers

Another segment of the program

## VIRGINIA CANCER STATISTICS IN *CANCER FACTS & FIGURES*

*Between 1995 and 2003, rates of cancer incidence have increased by 11 percent, from 398.6 to 441.3 cases per 100,000.*

*In the same time period, mortality (death) rates have declined by nine percent from 215.1 to 195.7 deaths per 100,000.*

—American Cancer Society, South Atlantic Division, *Cancer Facts & Figures 2006*

The American Cancer Society (ACS), South Atlantic Division, annually publishes *Cancer Facts and Figures*. Each year, staff from the Virginia Cancer Registry and the Division of Vital Statistics participate in a planning meeting to help define the statistical content of *Cancer Facts and Figures*. These two offices in the Virginia Department of Health regularly collaborate with the ACS on this publication, and provide statewide incidence and mortality statistics used in the Virginia section. This year, the planning meeting for the 2007 issue will be held in Raleigh, North Carolina, in October.

*Cancer Facts and Figures* is a primary resource for summaries of cancer incidence and mortality for the jurisdictions in the ACS South Atlantic Division: Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Washington, DC, and West Virginia. *Cancer Facts and Figures* profiles each ju-

risdiction in the ACS South Atlantic Division, providing a summary presentation of demographics and cancer incidence and mortality trends. Data are provided that compare Virginia to the United States with respect to early detection (mammograms, Pap tests, sigmoidoscopies/colonoscopies, and prostate-specific antigen tests) and prevention (cigarette smoking, physical activity, eating fruits and vegetables, and overweight). A two-page spread provides useful information on prevention and control status, activities, programs, and coalitions.

The lead article in the 2006 edition, which is currently available through ACS, is on eliminating disparities in special populations, with special emphasis on factors that contribute to disparities and the disproportionate effect of breast cancer on African American women.

## LOCAL BREAST HEALTH EVENT HELD

On September 23, 2006, the Crater Health District, in partnership with Tabernacle Baptist Church, Restoration of Petersburg Community Development Corporation, and Virginia Baptist General Convention SPICES program, hosted the first Petersburg Health Extravaganza. The event was sponsored by the Richmond Affiliate of the Susan G. Komen Foundation and the John Randolph Foundation. Over 110 community members attended the extravaganza. Approximately 30 health vendors from various organizations, including the American Cancer Society and the American Heart Association.

This event hosted a breast cancer corner where approximately 20-25 women

learned the proper technique for a breast self-exam. The American Cancer Society donated health information and breast models for the participants to practice. The event also highlighted information on prostate cancer especially for African American men. Adult participants were able to be screened for other chronic disease problems.

The local radio stations broadcasted the event live and announced the Free Mammogram Program in the Crater Health District for medically underserved women funded by the Susan G. Komen Foundation. For more information on the mammogram program, please call 804-863-1652.

## TOBACCO USE CESSATION QUITLINE CELEBRATES FIRST YEAR

This November, the Virginia Department of Health's Tobacco Use Control Project (TUCP) is celebrating a one-year anniversary of the first statewide toll-free phone cessation counseling service, called *Quit Now Virginia*. The quitline can be accessed by dialing 1-800-QUIT NOW (1-800-784-8669). Services are available in English and Spanish, with translation services available for other languages. A TTY line (1-877-777-6534) has been set up for the hearing-impaired.

Callers can speak with a live person between 8 am and midnight, seven days a week. On off-hours, callers are directed to listen to topic-specific messages or leave a message for call-back.

Callers, including healthcare providers and family/friends, can receive mailed information on quitting, self-help materials, and information on local resources, including insurance plans that cover cessation programs. Tobacco users, who are ready to quit and are eligible (Medicaid enrollees, uninsured persons), may receive more intensive phone counseling. A fax-referral system for healthcare providers is in the works.

Since its inception, over 1,500 calls have been made to the Quitline, including 1,310 calls from tobacco users. TUCP will be focusing on high-risk populations, such as rural residents, in the year to come.

*When you quit smoking,  
you get...*

- 11 minutes back for every cigarette you don't smoke
- 4 hours back for every pack you don't smoke
- 2 days back for every carton you don't smoke.

## EVERY WOMAN'S LIFE PROGRAM ABLE TO SCREEN MORE WOMEN



The Every Woman's Life (EWL) program is now able to increase the number of women it can screen and diagnose for breast and cervical cancer, thanks to funding allocated by the Virginia General Assembly this year. In addition, a new northern Virginia program provider site will ensure program services to more women in that area.

Effective July 1, the General Assembly earmarked \$405,176 for each year of the 2006-2008 biennium to expand services within the EWL program. The money will allow the program to screen and diagnose more women in the 40-49 year age range and provide diagnostic services to income-eligible women ages 18 to 39 who have symptoms of breast cancer or abnormal cervical cancer screening results. The EWL program expects it can provide services to approximately 1,000 additional women.

Those diagnosed by the program may be eligible for treatment through the Medicaid program.

Northern Virginia Community College (NVCC) is now offering EWL program services, making it one of two providers in the northern Virginia area. The high number of program eligible women in northern Virginia made increased coverage with two program sites necessary. NVCC will serve Arlington, Fairfax, Prince William and Loudon counties and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas and Manassas Park. The EWL Program has 23 provider sites statewide. To learn more about the EWL program, visit [www.vahealth.org/breastcancer](http://www.vahealth.org/breastcancer).





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**CPAC NEWS (CONT'D.)**

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was “Community Approaches to Address Cancer Disparities in Appalachia,” featuring a panel comprised of Marilyn Maxwell, Executive Director, Mountain Empire Older Citizens (MEOC), Big Stone Gap; Leigh Ann Bolinskey, Director, Mountain Laurel Cancer Center at MEOC; Ann Duesing, outreach librarian, UVa College at Wise; Tony Lawson, Graduate Medical Education Consortium; and Joseph Davis, Administrator, Johnston Memorial Cancer Program and a CPAC Advisory Board member.

Panel members described projects involving storytelling as a technique to talk about cancer issues, training librarians and community members in internet research, recruiting rarely screened women for cervical cancer, and promoting medical care access.

The next CPAC quarterly will be December 14, in Charlottesville. The program will feature Margo Michaels, Executive Director of the Education Network to Advance Cancer Clinical Trials (ENACCT), and a storytelling group from Southwest Virginia.

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Intensive effort continues on drafts of Virginia’s five-year cancer control plan. CPAC Work Groups, Advisory-Board members, and other contributors have worked diligently during the past few months with Editor Sharon Dwyer to develop a comprehensive, outcome-oriented document to reduce the burden cancer imposes on citizens of the Commonwealth.

