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Contact Information:

Livingston County Department of Public Health
2300 East Grand River Avenue, Suite 102
Howell, MI 48843 517.546.9850 Fax: 517.546.6995



Livingston County Department of Public Health Promotes Cancer Control and Prevention in October

Howell, Michigan, September 26, 2008 - Local health departments across the state have designated October as Cancer Prevention and Control Month.

“Cancer is the second leading cause of death among Americans, exceeded only by heart disease,” said Dr. Donald Lawrenchuk, Medical Director for the Livingston County Department of Public Health (LCDPH). “While breast cancer awareness is typically promoted in October, we need to take this opportunity to educate Livingston County residents about other cancer screening services and resources available to them as well, since we are always working to promote healthy lifestyles.”

Regular screening and examinations by a health care provider can result in the prevention of cervical and colorectal cancers through the discovery and removal of precancerous lesions. Screening can detect cancers of the breast, colon, rectum, cervix, prostate, and oral cavity, and skin at earlier stages when treatment is more likely to be successful. Cancers that can be prevented or detected earlier by screening account for about half of all new cancer cases.

In 2006, the American Cancer Society estimated that 48,250 new cancer cases in Michigan were diagnosed with 19,470 cancer deaths occurring in our state.

Michigan’s Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) provides free breast and cervical cancer screening and diagnostic services to underserved women in Livingston County. Since the program began in 1991, over 114,000 women have been screened through the BCCCP with over 1,900 breast cancers and 2,000 cervical cancers diagnosed statewide. For more information about the local BCCCP, call 517-545-6618 or 810-844-7555.

In keeping with the theme of cancer prevention and control month, it is important to remember that we currently have two licensed and approved vaccines to protect against cancer. The first anti-cancer vaccine has been available in the U.S. for many years now. The Hepatitis B vaccine protects against the Hepatitis B virus and many of its complications, including liver cancer. It is currently universally recommended for health care professionals as well as the general public, and is also required for school admission in the state of Michigan. The second vaccine is designed to protect against Human Papilloma Virus (HPV). Gardasil is highly effective against four types of the HPV, including two that cause about 70 percent of cervical cancers. It is the first vaccine developed to prevent cervical cancer, precancerous genital lesions, and genital warts due to HPV. The vaccine is licensed for girls and women ages 9 through 26, and like the Hepatitis B vaccine, it is a three-dose series. Both vaccines are offered at our Wednesday walk in clinics at LCDPH. There is a charge.

LCDPH is committed to promoting wellness, preventing disease, providing health care, and protecting the environment. For additional information, visit www.lchd.org.

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