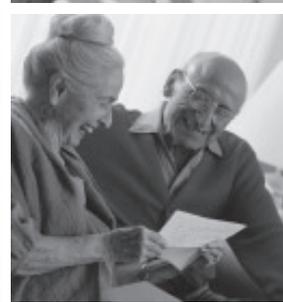
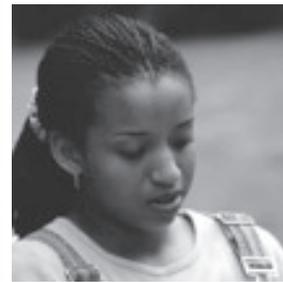


Cancer in Oregon: A Call to Action

Oregon Partnership for Cancer Control



March 2004

Oregon Partnership for Cancer Control

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March 2004

To All Oregonians:

"You have cancer" are the words that 18,000 Oregonians will hear in 2004. They will join the thousands of individuals in the state who are already living with the disease. By the end of the year, family members, friends, and co-workers will mourn the deaths of 7,000 Oregonians from cancer. The question often asked is, *"Why can't we do something about cancer?"*

There are many cancer related activities, resources, and services in Oregon. And there is more to do. Reducing the burden of cancer in Oregon can be accomplished by working together to develop a comprehensive plan that is realistic and meaningful for the state. A dedicated and committed effort will define the roles we can each play as we strive to accomplish the following goals:

- Whenever possible, prevent cancer from occurring.
- When cancer does occur, find it in its earliest stage.
- When cancer is found, treat it with the most appropriate therapy available.
- Assure that the quality of life of each cancer patient is the best it can be.

Two years ago, we began meeting to explore the possibility of developing a cancer plan for Oregon. This year, we received funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to coordinate this planning effort. Our core planning committee is ready to expand the circle to develop a plan for Oregon, through the participation of individuals like you - from voluntary health organizations, professional associations, state and local public health agencies, health care providers, health care payers, cancer survivors, and concerned citizens.

We invite you to join us in this exciting opportunity and help reduce the burden of cancer in Oregon by developing a plan for our state.

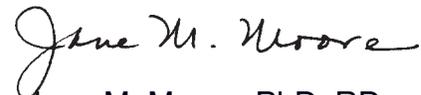
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Sincerely,



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Cancer in Oregon: A Call to Action



Why Does Oregon Need a State Plan for Comprehensive Cancer Control?

Cancer kills thousands of Oregonians each year and causes untold suffering for thousands more. One out of every four deaths in Oregon is due to cancer. While some cancer control activities are in place, there is no organized plan for Oregon. A collaborative approach to cancer control in Oregon, developed by community partners, will address the following issues:

- identification of gaps in services and health disparities
- increased prevention and early detection activities
- reduced death and suffering from cancer
- increased capacity to meet the needs of Oregon's diverse populations
- less duplication of effort among cancer services
- more efficient use of available resources
- focused efforts to reduce the cancer burden among populations at high risk

“I was diagnosed with prostate cancer in January of 1993. I’ve had surgery, radiation, and several medical and drug treatments but the cancer continues to grow, and I’m now looking for another treatment plan to extend my life.”

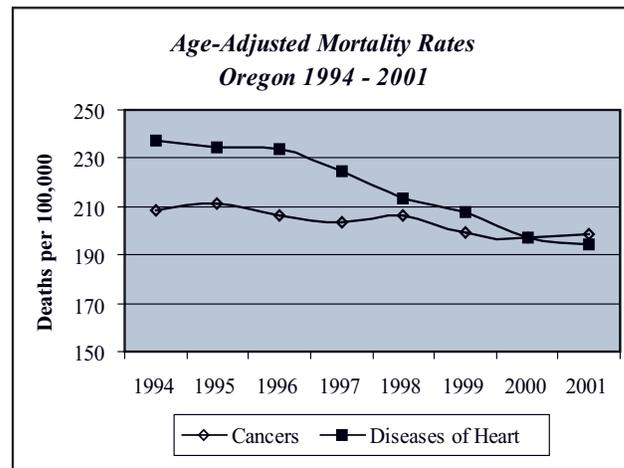
-72 y.o. man, Aumsville

The overall goal is to reduce the burden of cancer at the local, state, and ultimately the national level. Comprehensive cancer control is defined as follows:

An integrated and coordinated approach to reducing cancer incidence, morbidity, and mortality through prevention, early detection, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliation.

How Big Is the Problem in Oregon?

Cancer takes an immense toll on Oregonians, both in loss of life and in human suffering. Each day, an average of 19 individuals die of cancer in Oregon. In 2001, for the first time, cancer overtook heart disease as the number one cause of death in the state. In all, 7,084 Oregonians lost their lives to cancer in that year. While cancer is more common in the elderly, it also kills many in the prime of life. During 2001, 1,960 Oregonians younger than age 65 died of cancer.



Source: *Cancer in Oregon, 2001, Oregon State Cancer Registry*

The economic costs of cancer are also great. Oregon Health Services estimates that in the year 2000, hospitalizations alone for cancer cost \$210 million in our state. If we consider indirect expenses such as loss of productivity from disability and death, the estimated total economic burden of cancer in the U.S. for 2002 was \$172 billion. Adjusting these figures for Oregon's population, the estimated economic burden for the state in 2002 was \$2 billion. That's \$603 for every man, woman, and child in Oregon.

Oregon Ranks Above the Nation for Some Cancers

The four most common cancers among Oregonians are breast, prostate, lung, and colorectal. These are also the most frequent cancers nationally. For several cancers, though, incidence rates in Oregon (that is, the frequency with which new cases occur) are higher than the national average. Nationally*, Oregon ranks:

- **10th** for prostate cancer
- **8th** for lung cancer among women
- **7th** for invasive melanoma
- **2nd** for breast cancer

* Of 38 states with cancer registries meeting Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) standards.

Frequency of Some Cancers Is Increasing

Oregon has been tracking incidence and death rates for cancer through the Oregon State Cancer Registry (OSCaR) since 1996. This monitoring has revealed some disturbing trends. Five types of cancer, while not among the most common, are troubling. In Oregon, the incidence rate is increasing each year, as noted below:

Melanoma among males	3%
Non-Hodgkin lymphoma	4%
Thyroid cancer	5%
Esophageal cancer	7%
Liver cancer among males	12%

Mother of three, diagnosed in 1978 with melanoma. “It has returned three times, but I have been symptom free for five years.”

In addition, deaths from esophageal cancer in Oregon men are increasing 5% a year. In 2000, men had a 40% higher cancer death rate than women for all cancers.

Preventable Cancers: What Can We Do?

Most cancers are potentially preventable. Risk factors for cancers include individual behaviors, environmental exposures, and genetics. Some of these factors are beyond our control. We don't have much choice about our age, gender, or genes. But some risk factors, tobacco use and diet, for instance, can be modified. For example:

- **Stop all tobacco use.** This could eliminate about 90% of lung cancers (the leading cause of cancer-related death) as well as a large number of oral cancers, bladder cancers, cervical cancers, pancreatic cancers, and some gastrointestinal cancers.
- **Limit excessive alcohol use.** This could cut the rates of oral cancer as well as throat and vocal cord cancer, particularly among smokers.
- **Reduce the amount of animal fat we eat.** This might significantly decrease the incidence of colorectal cancers.
- **Limit sun exposure.** Even regular use of sunscreen can decrease the risk for the most common skin cancers.

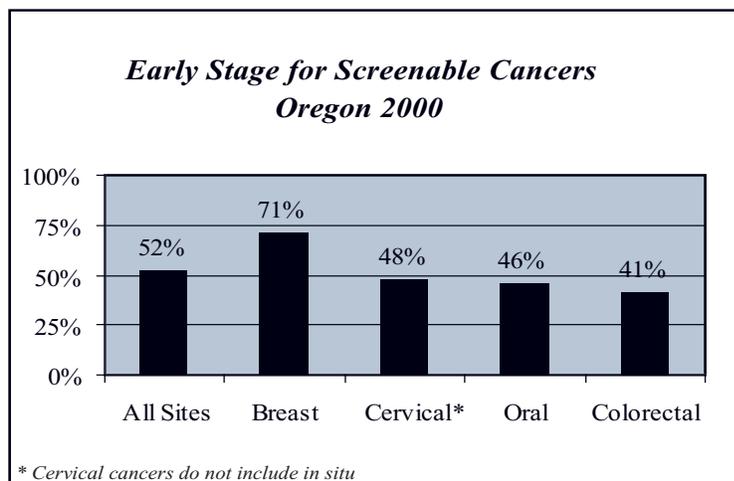
Cancer Screening and Prevention: How are we doing?

In addition to changes in diet or lifestyle, Oregonians can reduce their cancer burden by using appropriate screening tests. Many cancers, if diagnosed at an early stage, are treatable or curable. Both cervical cancer screening (by Pap smear) and colorectal cancer screening (by testing for blood in the stool, sigmoidoscopy, or colonoscopy) can actually prevent cancer by catching a problem early, before cancer has a chance to develop. Recommended screening for these two cancers could nearly eliminate them. Mammography screening can identify breast cancer in early stages.

Despite gains in the past few years, there is a lot more we can do to improve cancer screening among Oregonians. As this chart shows, less than half of cervical cancers and colorectal cancers are caught in the earliest stages (in situ and local) when they are most treatable. With regular screening, we could catch almost all at an early stage, and we could catch many problems before cancer even developed!

“Early detection is key—at 40 years I had my first mammogram and they found cancer in my right breast. Thank God it was stage one, no lymph nodes. My sisters, my daughters, and mom are happy I’m still here.”

*– Woman, early 40s,
North Plains*



Source: Oregon State Cancer Registry

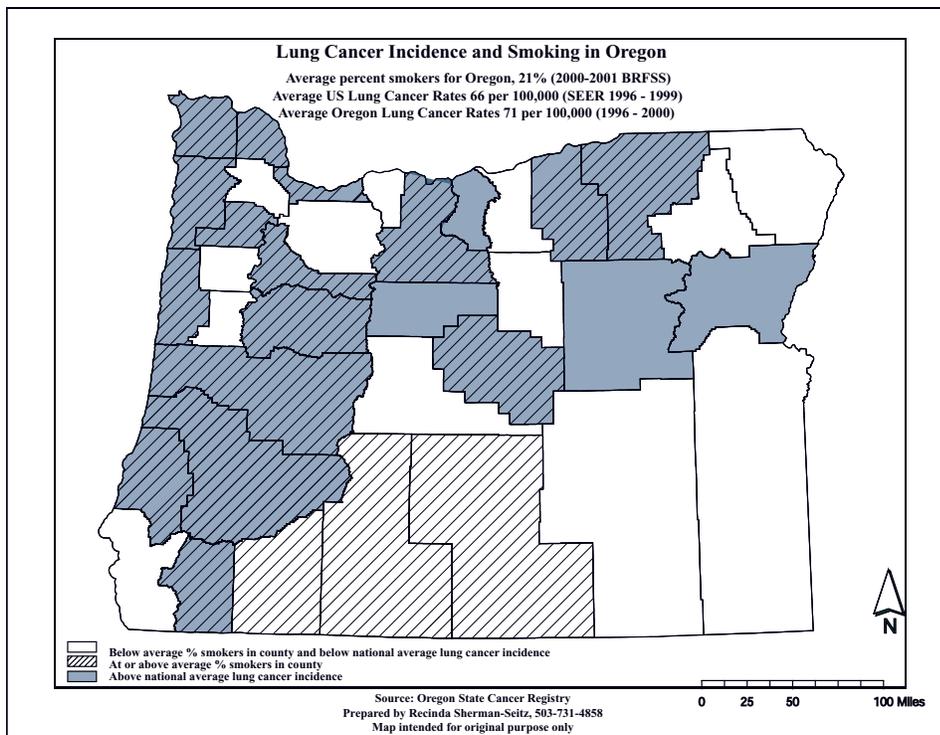
Some Groups in Oregon Are Disproportionately Affected

Cancer rates vary by sex, race, age, and geographic location. Some of these differences are due to lifestyle choices. Some geographic differences reflect variations in who lives where. For instance, retirement communities will have greater numbers of cancers because cancer risk increases with age. Such areas with increased burden might require additional clinical services and hospice care.

Other communities will have higher rates of cancer due to behaviors that increase cancer risk. As this map shows, Oregon counties with higher smoking rates tend to have high lung cancer rates. Lowering smoking rates in these areas might decrease the frequency of lung cancer.

“When my daughter was diagnosed...four years ago, we went through a very scary and trying time. We were so fortunate to have a happy ending to our story.”

– Mother of 7 y.o. child, St. Helens



Some racial and ethnic communities have higher rates of certain types of cancer. In some cases, this could be due to problems with access to cancer screening services or the impact of cultural beliefs and practices about cancer and its treatment. Among Oregon's Latina/Hispanic women, cervical cancer is the second most common cancer diagnosed. It is extremely rare among other racial/ethnic groups. By reaching out to Latina women, sharing culturally appropriate information about the benefits of cervical cancer screening, and by assuring screening access, it is possible to all but eliminate this preventable disease.

What Does Cancer Mean to Those Who Experience It?

Cancer profoundly affects the life of cancer patients/survivors and their families. A person with cancer often deals with pain, nausea, and fatigue. There can be huge changes affecting the patient's family, friends, co-workers, and loved ones. The impact of cancer is physical, emotional, social, and financial.

The good news is that we expect the number of cancer survivors to grow tremendously in the next decades. Many individuals live beyond a cancer diagnosis when it is found and treated early.

The aging of the population alone will increase the number of persons who are diagnosed and treated for cancer and who will survive. In Oregon, we estimate the number of survivors to be over 111,500 in 2002 and 158,000 in the year 2015.

Hospice services provide pain management and other physical, spiritual, and emotional care to 75% of those who die of cancer each year. Between 1991 and 2001, the number of cancer patients cared for by Hospice in Oregon has more than doubled, increasing from 1,909 to 4,185.

“I couldn’t have managed the care of my daughter who died of a brain tumor without the support of the hospice nurse, social worker, and chaplin.”

*— Mother of 22
y.o., Bend*

A Cancer Strategy for the Future

The following national organizations promote a collaborative approach among key stakeholders and partners to provide opportunities to further reduce the burden of cancer.

*American Cancer Society
American College of Surgeons, Commission on Cancer
Association of Chronic Disease Directors
C-Change (formerly the National Dialogue on Cancer)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Intercultural Cancer Council
National Cancer Institute
North American Association of Central Cancer Registries*

“Hope, the best four letter word!! I’m a 4-1/2 year survivor and glad to be here!”

*– Woman, 50s,
Lebanon*

Developing Oregon's Plan for the Future

Key partners have come together to form an initial planning group for comprehensive cancer control activities in Oregon — the Oregon Partnership for Cancer Control (OPCC). The group currently includes representatives from the following organizations:

American Cancer Society
American College of Surgeons
Kaiser Permanente
OHSU Cancer Institute
Oregon Health Services
Oregon & SW Washington Affiliate/Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation
Northwest Tribal Cancer Control Program
Regence Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Oregon
St. Charles Medical Center

However, it will take the involvement and participation of many individuals statewide to develop a plan to reduce deaths and suffering from cancer for all Oregonians. This can only be achieved through the collaboration and involvement of the various partners and organizations that contribute to the cancer care services in Oregon.

That's why we're sending you this information. We need your help to get cancer under control in Oregon, and we would like you to participate in developing this plan with us.

By working together, we will be able to

- *promote regular cancer screening to detect common cancers at an early, often curable stage*
- *provide cancer related services that are accessible and acceptable*
- *prevent many other cancers altogether by avoiding exposure to cancer-causing agents such as tobacco smoke*
- *rapidly adopt cutting-edge treatment*
- *lessen the suffering through optimal care of cancer survivors and those with terminal disease*
- *prolong life and minimize suffering through state-of-the-art therapy*

How will the statewide plan be developed?

Workgroups will be formed to address the following areas of comprehensive cancer control:

Cancer Prevention and Early Detection: risk factors for cancer and early detection issues.

Cancer Treatment and Quality of Life: cancer treatment, rehabilitation, and palliation including availability and access to quality care.

Public Policy and Legislation: policies to improve cancer prevention, early detection, treatment, rehabilitation, and palliation.

Public Awareness and Education: increasing public awareness and knowledge of cancer issues.

Data Management: identify and update data resources.

What has the OPCC done so far?

The OPCC planning group has met regularly since March 2002 to discuss comprehensive cancer control and affirm the need for a statewide plan for Oregon. The group has developed vision and mission statements, as well as materials for recruiting additional participants. The group has secured grant funding to support planning activities.

After the plan is developed, then what?

The 5-year plan...will include goals, objectives, and activities to affect the broad spectrum of cancer issues in Oregon. The organizational structure of the OPCC, the Coordinating Committee, and its workgroups will be defined.

Implementation...will require a coordinated and integrated approach from multiple stakeholders. Coordination will ensure that currently available resources will be used effectively and efficiently for the maximum benefit for the community and cancer patients. The OPCC will also seek other sources of funds for the implementation of plan strategies.

Long-term Outcome...will result from putting the plan into practice. Oregonians can make systemic, environmental, and behavioral changes that will decrease cancer incidence, suffering, and death and will improve quality of life for all populations in Oregon.

Why is my involvement important?

A broad, statewide planning process is critical to our success. We want to be sure that Oregon's cultural and geographic diversity is represented. Everyone's involvement is important to bring individual and organizational perspectives to our dialogue about cancer. In whatever way you are available to help, the Oregon Partnership for Cancer Control needs you!

If you have questions or would like to get involved, please contact:

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