

## Cancer Risk Reduction and Early Detection Education

This project, funded by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas ([CPRIT] formerly Texas Cancer Council) since 1992, supports agent activities providing cancer risk reduction and early detection education throughout Texas – particularly for under-served groups living in rural areas.

### Relevance

- Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Texas and the United States and is expected to become the leading cause of death within the next decade.
- Helping children develop healthy habits is an important part of the battle to conquer cancer.
- Early detection education is another important way to reduce the impact of cancer.
- A higher proportion of cancers diagnosed in rural Texans are diagnosed at an invasive stage rather than at more treatable stages.
- Up to two-thirds of cancer cases can be prevented if behavioral changes are made.
- Cancer incidence increases with age.
- African Americans have the highest rates of mortality for lung, breast, prostate, colon, and cervical cancers.
- More than 97,000 Texans develop cancer each year.
- 38,000 Texans die from cancer each year.
- 10,200 Texans die each year due to tobacco use or exposure to tobacco smoke.
- 12,100 new cases of breast cancer are diagnosed annually in Texas.
- 1,100 new cases of invasive cervical cancer are diagnosed each year in Texas.
- 2,700 new cases of skin cancer are

diagnosed each year in Texas, with incidence increases beginning in the early teenage years. Skin cancer is the seventh-leading cancer in Texas adolescents 15-19 years of age.

- Ten years ago, cancer costs in Texans were more than \$14 billion each year. Today, the costs are much higher, and a study is underway to update the figures. Updated Texas costs will be available in early 2009.

### Response

This project addresses the continuing need for cancer prevention, risk reduction, and early detection education. Funding from CPRIT provides educational resources and professional support to county Extension agents and their volunteers. Forty-six cancer mini-grants were distributed across the state in 2008 to purchase cancer resources, which included:

- pedometers for *Walk Across Texas* in Title I schools;
- ultraviolet beads and other materials to make bracelets that detect sun exposure at Farm Safety Days, health fairs, school events, and community activities; and
- informational exhibits and other displays with cancer prevention and early detection messages for health fairs and community programming.

Project funding also supports development of cancer prevention and risk reduction educational programs, packages, and websites for use by agents, volunteers, and the public:

- *Hallelujah to Health* is a faith-based program to encourage African-American women to seek breast and cervical cancer screening. It includes a curriculum and marketing package with an informational exhibit, brochures, skits, and reminder newsletters. See <http://fcs.tamu.edu/health/h2h/index.php>.



- *Put it Outside for Healthier Kids* is a program that encourages parents who smoke to take their smoking outside and away from their children. See <http://putitoutside.tamu.edu/>.
- Activities that meet the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) requirements for schools implementing *Walk Across Texas!* were created. See <http://walkacrosstexas.tamu.edu>.
- *Cool in the Shade, Don't Dip, No Butts, and Get Movin* websites provide cancer prevention information created by youth for others their age. See <http://fcs.tamu.edu/health/index.php>; click on the links cited at *Lower Your Cancer Risk*.
- A collection of cancer prevention informational exhibits and displays are located in all 12 district Extension and Research Centers.

## Results

To date, approximately 1.7 million Texans have been informed on crucial, life-saving information since 1992 because of funding from CPRIT. In 2008, over 183,844 Texans were reached through the Texas AgriLife Extension Service by increasing cancer awareness, prevention, and early detection.

Schools throughout the state utilized the *Walk Across Texas!* TEKS lessons to increase children's physical activity. The 278 lessons were downloaded over 57,000 times in FY 2008.

*Cool in the Shade, Don't Dip, No Butts, and Get Movin* websites generated over 320,128 unique visitor hits in FY 2008; of those, approximately 13,870 participants were Texas residents. The age breakdown is as follows:

- 21 percent – Texas elementary students,
- 23 percent – Texas middle school students,
- 21 percent – Texas high school students, and
- 20 percent – Texas parents.

*Put it Outside for Healthier Kids* reached approximately 500 Texas residents, who committed to improving the health of their families by taking their smoking outside and away from their kids.

Since 2006, more than 2,100 African-American women have received crucial, life-saving information on breast and cervical cancer through *Hallelujah to Health* classes. Results from 2008 indicate that of the approximate 306 African-American women who completed surveys, 69 percent (211 women) were not in compliance with the American Cancer Society (ACS) guidelines for receiving a mammogram but planned to schedule one after the intervention. Likewise, of the 149 women who reported that they had not received a Pap test within the ACS screening guidelines, 72 percent (108 women) planned to schedule a Pap test after participating in the *Hallelujah to Health* program.

## Participant Comments

One Extension agent, who received a mini-grant, reported great success in reaching the youth in her county with a sun-safety program. She said, "Youth were very excited about the program and several comments were made, such as: 'I am going to start using sun block!' and 'I did not know that on cloudy days you can get sunburned.'"

Another Extension agent reported, "One employee was so impressed with the visuals demonstrated at a tobacco cessation program done for local hospital employees that she called her son to the facility to see the visuals himself in hopes that if he were to see the results, he might have more incentive to quit using tobacco."

One *Walk Across Texas!* participant stated, "Walk Across Texas motivated me to keep walking and striving for better health – I even lost 16 pounds during the program."

A *Hallelujah to Health* participant stated, "I plan to have a pap test and mammogram every year."

The *Put It Outside for Healthier Kids* program was implemented by an agent who stated, "100 percent of participants made the pledge to keep their vehicles and homes smoke free. One participant even commented that she wanted a copy of the pledge to hand out at her place of business in the town!"

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