



St. Mary's County Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

www.smchd.org

William B. Icenhower, MD, MPH, Health Officer
21580 Peabody Street,
Leonardtown, MD 20650

Contact: Leslie Payne,
Public Information Officer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Telephone: 301-475-4318

Fax: 301-475-4350

E-mail: paynel@smhd.com

PROSTATE CANCER EDUCATION PROMOTES INFORMED DECISIONS

LEONARDTOWN, MD (August 30, 2006) – Men in St. Mary's County are the target of a new health education effort at St. Mary's County Health Department beginning in September, National Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. Every man should know the risks of prostate cancer and ask their doctor about appropriate screening for this disease, according to Karen Russell, Wellness and Health Promotion Program manager at the health department.

Prostate Cancer is the third leading cause of cancer death among Maryland men. The American Cancer Society projects there will be about 4,300 new cases of prostate cancer in Maryland in 2006. In light of these statistics, the health department recently expanded its cancer awareness efforts and is now available for public presentations to educate people about the disease and to promote healthy decision making about when to go for screening.

(more)

Prostate cancer education, p. 2

Russell is particularly concerned about the prevalence of the disease among African American men. “While the chance of getting prostate cancer increases as a man gets older, there are other factors that could also increase a man’s risk, including his family history and his race. Men with a father or brother who had prostate cancer are more likely to develop prostate cancer. Also prostate cancer is more common among African Americans or men of African descent than among whites,” states Russell. The health department will be making a special effort to reach the county’s population of black males with this information.

Early prostate cancer usually does not result in symptoms. However, according to information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, symptoms may include: blood in the urine, the need to urinate frequently (especially at night), weak or interrupted urine flow, pain or burning feeling while urinating, the inability to urinate, and constant pain in the lower back, pelvis or upper thighs.

The American Cancer Society encourages men to learn as much as they can about their personal risks for prostate cancer and to talk to their doctors about options for early screening and about potential complications of diagnosis and treatment so that each man can make an informed decision about his health. “Our job is to educate all men about prostate cancer and encourage them to initiate an open dialogue with their

(more)

Prostate cancer, p. 3

doctors about prostate cancer,” concludes Russell.

For more information about prostate cancer or to schedule a presentation for your group or organization, call the St. Mary’s County Health Department Wellness and Health Promotion Program at 301-475-4356.