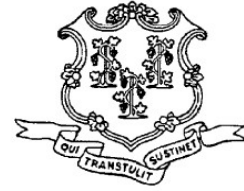


News



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Connecticut Department of Public Health

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Department of Public Health Stresses Importance of Routine Screening for Cervical Cancer

Free Screenings Available for Low-Income, Uninsured Women

Hartford – The Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH), as part of national Cervical Health Awareness Month, is reminding women in Connecticut to schedule their routine Papanicolaou (Pap) test, one of the most important tools for the early detection and prevention of cervical cancer.

“The early detection of cervical cancer is one of the best ways to successfully treat the disease,” said DPH Commissioner Dr. J. Robert Galvin. “Going for routine Pap testing can actually help prevent cervical cancer and save lives.”

Cervical cancer can usually be prevented if precancerous cervical lesions are found through Pap tests and treated. Routine Pap tests decrease a woman's risk for developing cervical cancer because they can detect precancerous cervical lesions at the earliest, most treatable stages.

According to the American Cancer Society, 50 percent of women diagnosed with cervical cancer in the United States have never had a Pap test. The National Cancer Institute has projected that in the United States, 12,200 women will be diagnosed with, and 4,210 women will die from, cervical cancer during 2011. Although Connecticut has met the Healthy People 2010 goal to reduce death from cervical cancer, an average 127 women are still diagnosed with the disease, and an average of 35 women still die from it every year in our state.

To ensure all women in Connecticut have access to this essential screening, DPH offers free Pap tests through its Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program for low-income women who cannot afford cervical cancer screening. Eligible women must be:

- At or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level
- Be between 19 to 64 years of age for clinical Pap tests
- Have no health insurance
- Have health insurance that excludes routine Pap tests
- Have an insurance deductible of \$1,000 or more

Cervical cancer was once the leading cause of cancer death for women in the United States. However, over the past four decades, the incidence (the number of cervical cancers detected) and mortality (the number of deaths from cervical cancer) have declined significantly, primarily because of the widespread use of the Pap test.

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The American Cancer Society recommends that cervical cancer screening begin approximately three years after a woman begins having sexual intercourse, but no later than at 21 years of age.

For more information on free cervical cancer screenings, please visit the DPH website at www.ct.gov/dph/breast&cervical or call the Department of Public Health at (860) 509-7804.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health is the state's leader in public health policy and advocacy with a mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of our state. To contact the department, please visit its website at www.ct.gov/dph or call (860) 509-7270.

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