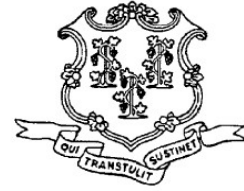


# News



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

January 5, 2009

Connecticut Department of Public Health

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## **Department of Public Health Stresses Importance of Annual 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 annual cervical cancer screening, one of the most important tools in the early detection and prevention of the disease.

“Although the number of new cases of cervical cancer has declined over the years, we are still losing too many lives due to this disease,” stated DPH Commissioner Dr. J. Robert Galvin. “Going for regular Pap tests can help detect cervical cancer early and save lives.”

According to the American Cancer Society, 50 percent of women diagnosed with cervical cancer never had a Papanicolaou (Pap) test. In 2007, there were approximately 11,150 new cases of cervical cancer and 3,670 deaths in the U.S in 2007. Nearly 100 women in Connecticut were diagnosed with cervical cancer in 2007.

To ensure all women in Connecticut have access to this essential screening, the DPH offers free Pap tests for low-income and uninsured or medically underserved women through its Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. 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 once was the leading cause of cancer death for women in the United States. However, during the past four decades, incidence and mortality (the number of deaths each year) from cervical cancer have declined significantly, primarily because of the widespread use of the Pap test.

Cervical cancer can usually be prevented if precancerous cervical lesions are found through Pap tests and treated. Regular Pap tests decrease a woman's risk for developing cervical cancer because they can detect precancerous cervical lesions at early, treatable stages. Cervical cancer screening should begin approximately three years after a woman begins having sexual intercourse, but no later than at 21 years old.

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For more information on the free screenings, please visit the DPH website at [www.ct.gov/dph](http://www.ct.gov/dph) and select “Breast and Cervical Cancer” under “Programs and Services” 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](http://www.ct.gov/dph) or call (860) 509-7270.*

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