

CERVICAL CANCER IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Where We Are

Cervical cancer remains an important problem globally, and an important problem for some women in the United States, including women in South Carolina. Prevention and early detection with Pap testing has drastically reduced the rate of new cases and death rates from invasive cervical cancer. However, the rates remain significantly higher in Black and Hispanic women compared to White women. Infection with cancer-causing types of human papillomavirus (HPV) is considered a necessary underlying cause of cervical cancer. Other factors, such as increasing consumption of fruits and vegetables (especially carrots and dark leafy greens) and avoiding exposure to cigarette smoke may reduce risk. Anything that compromises immune function, such as poor diet, excessive alcohol intake, or tobacco may increase risk.

The development of HPV vaccines is a major cancer preventive breakthrough. Universal application of the vaccines in boys and girls could reduce the rate of new cases of cervical cancer in the future and could possibly eliminate the disparities in disease rates by race, income level, geographic location or some combination of these.

Thus, the two major strategies to help eliminate cervical cancer is to make routine screening available for all and promote use of HPV vaccines among those eligible.

South Carolina Statistics

- Cervical cancer is the **20th** most common cancer diagnosed overall.
- It is the **12th** most commonly diagnosed cancer in women alone.
- It ranks **20th** for cancer mortality overall and **14th** in women alone.
- Black women are diagnosed at nearly **two** times the rate of White women for this disease.
- Black women die at nearly a **two** times higher rate from this disease than White women.

Call to Action!

South Carolinians:

- Advocate for a large increase in the cigarette tax by contacting your elected officials.
- Work to keep your community smoke-free. Support efforts to make communities smoke-free by contacting your elected officials.
- Prevent children and adolescents from starting to smoke cigarettes.
- Promote smoking cessation among current smokers.

Legislators: *in addition to the above*

- Make screening and follow-up care available through continued funding of the Best Chance Network.
- Expand coverage of screening and follow-up care for women who do not qualify for the Best Chance Network but are uninsured or underinsured.
- Pass legislation to support funding of HPV vaccination for all recommended.
- Support a significant cigarette tax increase.
- Support smoke-free workplace legislation.

Clinicians and Hospital or Medical Facility Administrators:

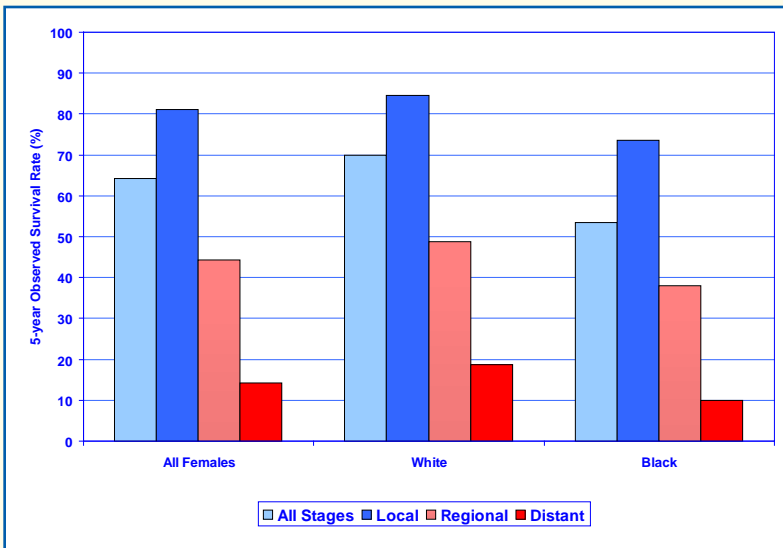
- Encourage participation in clinical trials of innovative screening and vaccination protocols.
- Be sure eligible patients are encouraged to get routine Pap tests and follow-up care for abnormal results.
- Report cancer cases to your cancer registry.

South Carolina Success

Statewide Cervical Collaboration:

The creation of a Cervical Cancer subcommittee within the SCCA has resulted in significant progress following the launch of cervical cancer prevention and control efforts through “Moving to Action: Addressing Cervical Cancer in South Carolina.” The collaborative efforts of the subcommittee include the recently published cervical cancer special issue of the Journal of the South Carolina Medical Association. The document features scientific articles, community perspectives, and cervical cancer and HPV information resources.





Cervix Uteri Cancer 5-yr Observed Survival Rate (%) by SEER Stage at Diagnosis and Race, South Carolina, 1996-2005

Note: excludes in situ cancers and children (ages 0-19)

Source: South Carolina Central Cancer Registry

- S.C. women with cervical cancer diagnosed at the earliest stage, before any invasion or spread of cancer cells, have greater than an 80% chance of survival for five years.
- However, when S.C. women are diagnosed with cervical cancer after regional or distant spread has occurred, the chance of surviving five years drops to 44% then 14%, respectively.
- White women in S.C. have higher five-year survival rates than Black women for cervical cancer at each stage of disease at diagnosis.



THE
WITNESS
PROJECT®

The SCCA is pleased to be a partner in The Witness Project, a community intervention addressing breast and cervical cancer in African-American women in South Carolina.