

## Conclusion

There is little doubt that South Carolina is carrying a particularly high cancer burden. One out of five South Carolinians is likely to develop cancer in his or her lifetime. In certain high risk groups, the probability of developing cancer is even greater. Certain cancers, such as those associated with smoking (esophageal, lung and oral cancers) and several less common cancers (kidney, pancreatic and multiple myeloma) are diagnosed more frequently in South Carolinians than in the nation as a whole.

Even though the average South Carolinian's overall risk of developing cancer is lower than the rest of the nation (Grade = A), his or her risk of dying as a result of the disease is higher (Grade = F). In many cases, the higher death rates in South Carolina occur in cancers that can be either treated early when detected through routine screening methods (breast, cervical, colorectal, oral and prostate) or prevented by decreasing one's exposure to known risk factors such as smoking (esophageal, lung and oral cancers).

As noted within the report, there are several cancers in which there are large disparities among racial groups in incidence or mortality. Many of these disparities are even greater in South Carolina than across the nation. Statewide, black women are much more likely to die from breast cancer than white women. Black males are significantly more likely to die from colorectal, esophageal, oral and prostate cancers than are their white counterparts. In some cases, such as with breast cancer, the nationwide decrease in the number of new cases and deaths is not observed in all racial groups.

## Conclusion (Continued)

We now know that there are certain behaviors that either increase or decrease one's risk of developing cancer. Almost 90 percent of lung cancer is associated with tobacco use. Nearly 90 percent of colorectal cancers are preventable with screening and a healthy lifestyle. South Carolinians fall below the nation in adopting a healthy lifestyle and the data for South Carolina youth are even more disturbing (36% of youth reported smoking cigarettes on one or more occasion in the last 30 days). By encouraging individuals to avoid smoking, exercise regularly, chose a healthy diet, avoid obesity and follow cancer screening guidelines, we can significantly reduce the number of individuals who are diagnosed with cancer and diagnose more cancers in the early/treatable stages.

The cost of cancer treatment far exceeds the cost of screening and prevention. We should no longer accept failing grades or even average grades when that means South Carolinians are dying of cancer when we have the knowledge to prevent it. Together we can strengthen and sustain the capacity of community and state initiatives to move toward reducing the