

Public Health Brief

September 2010

Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

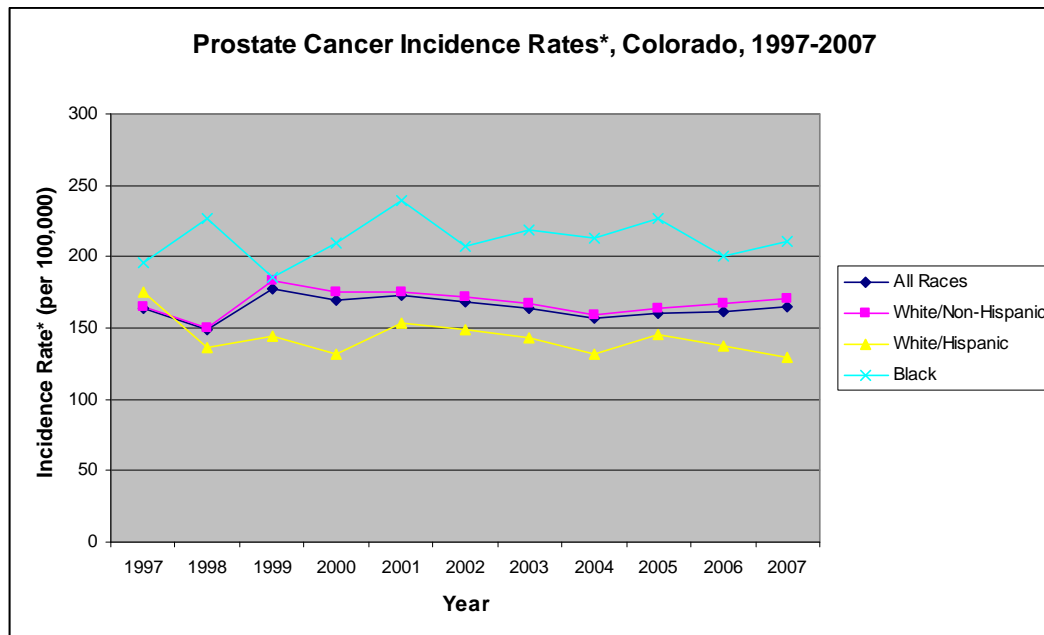
By Maura Proser, MPH

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month! This serves as a time to raise awareness of the most frequently diagnosed cancer in men. For more information on Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, visit www.zerocancer.org.

Prostate cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in men in the United States and in Colorado. It accounted for 30.7% of all cancer diagnoses in Colorado men during the period 2003-2007. Prostate cancer incidence and mortality are both significantly higher in Colorado than the United States as a whole.

Overall prostate cancer incidence has remained relatively unchanged in Colorado since 1997. The incidence rates for men of all races were identical in 2007 as in 1997. However, disparities do exist. While incidence stayed relatively stable for white men and actually decreased 26% over that time period for Hispanic men, it increased 7% for black men, who consistently have the highest incidence rates of prostate cancer in the State. Black and Hispanic men also have lower 5-year survival rates than white men.

Incidence and mortality have decreased in Arapahoe County, while both have increased in Douglas County. In Adams County incidence has decreased, but mortality has increased. In 2008, only Arapahoe County had a prostate cancer death rate below the nation's *Healthy People 2010* objective.



*Rates are per 100,000, age-adjusted to the 2000 United States standard population

Source: Colorado Central Cancer Registry, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, www.cdph.state.co.us/pp/cccr



Tri-County Health Department • Serving Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties
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Richard L. Vogt, M.D., Executive Director

Screening for Prostate Cancer:

Currently there is not enough evidence to fully determine if the potential benefits of prostate cancer screening outweigh the potential risks. Studies have shown that the prostate specific antigen (PSA) test may produce a high number of false positives, thus leading to further testing and potentially invasive procedures that may be unnecessary. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend that men discuss with their physician the risk of prostate cancer, as well as the risks and benefits to screening options, and reach an informed decision based on the patient's personal preferences and needs

What is Informed Decision Making?

Informed decision making is when a patient makes his own decision related to prostate cancer screening based on the following factors:

- The patient understands the nature of prostate cancer and his own risk of the disease.
- The patient understands all potential benefits, risks, and alternatives to prostate cancer screening.
- The patient participates in the decision-making process at a level with which he is comfortable.

Shared decision making is when a patient and a health care provider mutually discuss and share information to assist the patient in making an informed decision. This process will still end with the patient making an informed decision for himself.

The CDC has free patient resources to help men in making an informed decision. *Prostate Cancer Screening: A Decision Guide* discusses prostate cancer and the available screening tests and is designed in an easy-to-read question-and-answer format. This resource is available in both English and Spanish. *Prostate Cancer Screening: A Decision Guide for African Americans* contains similar decision-making resources, with information targeted specifically toward African-American men, who are at higher risk than other men. You and your patients can access these resources online at http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/prostate/informed_decision_making.htm.

The American Cancer Society recommends that informed decision making discussions begin at age 50 for men of average risk, at age 45 for African American men and those with a first-degree relative diagnosed with prostate cancer younger than age 65, and at age 40 for men with multiple first-degree relatives with a diagnosis at young age.

As a health care provider, what can you do to assist your patients in making an informed decision?

- Provide information and resources to help each patient reach his own informed decision.
- Begin discussions at an age appropriate to each patient's personal risk.
- Remind patients that the decision is an individual one and that each decision should be in line with one's own needs and values.



References and Resources:

1. Colorado Central Cancer Registry, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, www.cdphe.state.co.us/pp/cccr
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/prostate/index.htm>
3. National Cancer Institute, <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/prostate>
4. American Cancer Society, <http://www.cancer.org/Cancer/ProstateCancer/index>
5. ZERO: The Project to End Prostate Cancer, www.zerocancer.org

For more information or questions, please contact:

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PLEASE NOTE:

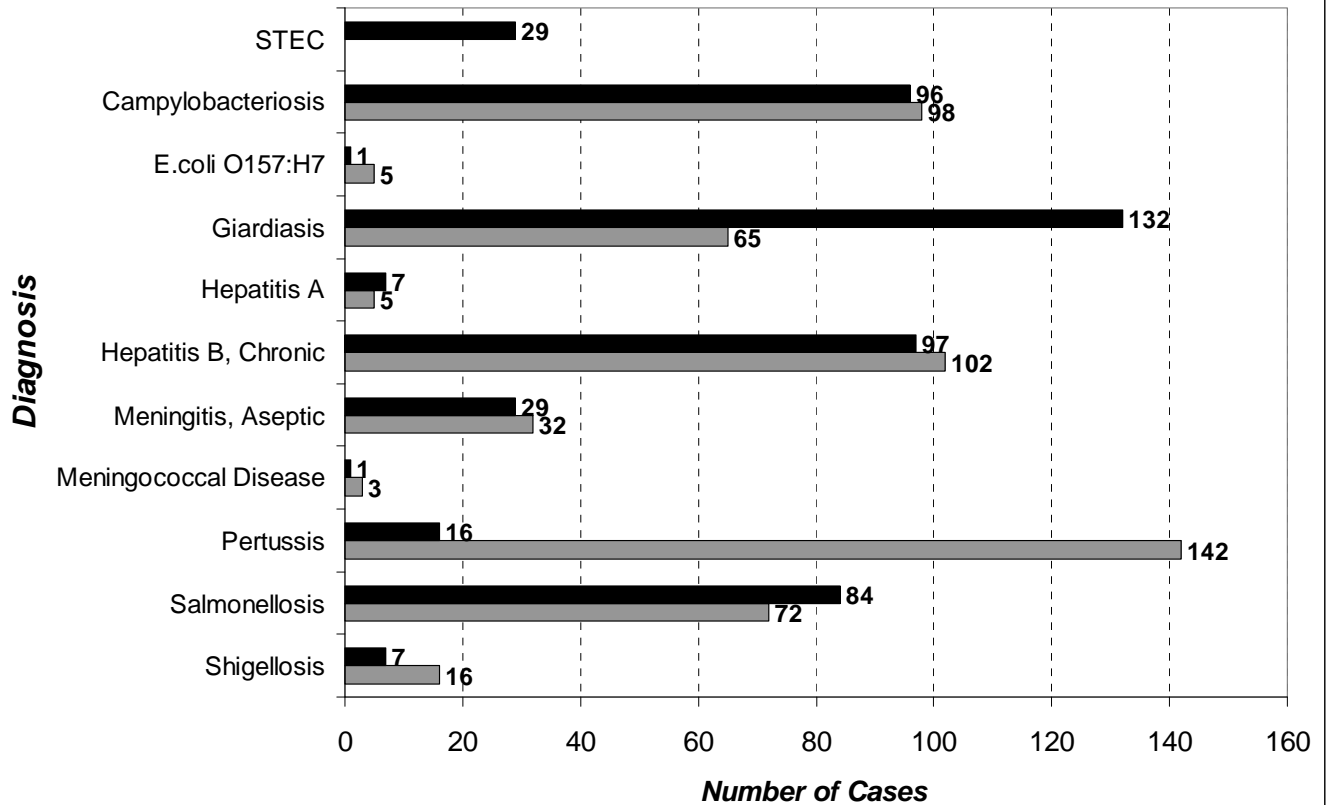
Tri-County Health Department Administrative Offices are moving Labor Day Weekend 2010.

Our new address: 6162 S. Willow Drive, Suite 100, Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Our main phone number will not change: (303) 220-9200.



Selected Diseases by Date of Report Adams, Arapahoe, and Douglas Counties 2010 YTD Through July



2010 YTD
 5-YR Median (2005-2009) YTD

