

# TEXAS C-STEP Newsletter

Colon Cancer Screening, Training, Education & Prevention

Texas A&M Health Science Center

8/31/2012

Year 1, Quarter 4

## About Texas C-STEP: A Year One Update

The Colon Cancer Screening, Training, Education and Prevention Program, or C-STEP, is a program that was started one year ago with funds from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas. The program ensures that screenings for colorectal cancer (colonoscopies) are available to underserved residents of the 7-county Brazos Valley region. C-STEP also supports physician training, community awareness, and education to reduce barriers to colorectal cancer screening.

The clinical team at the Texas A&M Physicians Family Medicine Center has conducted more than 400 screenings during Year 1 of the C-STEP program. In addition, over 1600 people have been reached directly through one-on-one education, while another 56,000 have been exposed to news/media coverage on colon cancer and the importance of screening.

Much of the contact with the community is a result of efforts by the Texas A&M Health Science Center's School of Rural Public

Health and the C-STEP team of community health workers.

Through its many clinical partners, C-STEP has established a referral network that incorporates Burleson, Brazos, Grimes, Leon, Madison, Robertson, and Washington counties... But a doctor's referral is not required for the colonoscopy screening program. Any individual can self-refer, and determine if they qualify financially, by contacting the Texas A&M Physicians Family Medicine Center at (979) 776-8440, or visiting the CSTEP website: [www.texasstep.org](http://www.texasstep.org)

## By The Numbers

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In the first year of this grant:

- 401 people screened for colon cancer
- 1617 people directly educated about the importance of colon cancer screening
- 317 professional partners in C-STEP's network
- 22 family medicine residents trained in colonoscopy
- 12 community health workers completed training for certification



C-STEP Community Health Workers at the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Back-to-School Health and Information Fair are shown with organizer Patty Romero.

## Community Health Workers Important to C-STEP's Success ...

Language, medical mistrust and cultural norms are some of the barriers that prevent people from having cancer screenings. Using community health workers, or promotores, to assist in community outreach and education, and to help patients prepare for colonoscopy and navigate the health care system significantly reduces barriers to colorectal cancer screening.

This is due, in no small part, to the fact that community health workers are typically respected members of their community, who are familiar with the community's values and cultural norms.



The Texas Department of State Health Services offers community health worker certification through 160 hours of training by a state-approved program. The training covers eight core competencies or skill sets, including coordination, communication, advocacy, teaching, organizational skills, and knowledge on specific health issues.

*Congratulations* to the following individuals who, sponsored by C-

STEP, recently completed their training requirements for community health worker certification: **Angeles Ceja, Brianna Clark, Mirna Dubon, Nola Eugene, Brenda Hernandez, Rosa Hernandez, Rocio Hitt, Wei-Chen (Miso) Lee, Irasema Lopez Avila, Augusto Sarria, Julia Orona, and Divya Talwar.**

As a part of their training experience, the class volunteered at the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual Back-to-School Health & Information Fair (Bryan, Texas) sponsored by Chaplain Services. Initially started by Mr. Moses Herrera, and now managed by his niece Patricia Romero and other family members, the event attracts over 1500 participants each year. Accompanied by their parents, school-age children who attend and visit 15 booths receive backpacks filled with donated school supplies.

The community health workers publicized their participation through local media, such as Radio Alegria and LaVoz Hispana, a weekly newsmagazine. Two hundred and forty-six people visited the C-STEP table for information on colon cancer screening and 58 people met one-on-one with a community health worker to have their risk for colon cancer assessed.

## Coming to a County near you!

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Meet one-on-one with a community health worker to discuss your risk for colorectal cancer at one of these events:

© **Burleson County (Caldwell) – October 2012**

© **Madison County (Madisonville) – November 2012**

© **Leon County (Centerville) – February 2013**

© **Burleson County (Somerville) – March 2013**

© **Grimes County – April 2013**

For more details, please call Chi-Chi Ojinnaka @ (979) 862-4993



CHW instructor Julie St. John (back row, far right) with new C-STEP Community Health Workers.

## MEET OUR NURSES

**Sonja Welch**, RN is the charge nurse who oversees colonoscopy procedures at the Texas A&M Physicians Family Medicine Center. Sonja is directly involved in patient care before, during and after a colonoscopy. In her role as a patient advocate, she ensures that the patient is safe, comfortable, and always the first priority.

Her responsibilities include keeping track of all scheduling, evaluating patients to decide which patients can have a colonoscopy safely, and maintaining the cleanliness and sterility of the equipment used.

Sonja has been a nurse for 12 years and has worked in the hospital setting for much of her career. She is currently finishing up her BSN and will begin the MSN program with Texas A&M Corpus Christi in the fall of 2013.

Sonja is ably assisted by licensed vocational nurse (LVN) **Elisabeth (Liz) Almanza**. Liz is the procedure nurse on the C-STEP project. She is also involved with providing patient care prior to and after procedures and is certified in advanced cardiac life support. Her duties include getting vital signs and consent forms and starting the



*Texas A&M Physicians procedure team.*

IV before a patient is taken to the procedure room. In the procedure room, she is responsible for monitoring the patient's vital signs.

Elizabeth has been a nurse for 7 years and has worked at the Texas A&M Physicians Family Medicine Center for almost 2 years.

**Christine Pinones** has worked as the nurse manager at the Texas A&M Physicians Family Medicine Center since 2008. She has been a registered nurse for 22 years and also has 5 years of experience in hospice case management.

She served as the clinical program coordinator on the C-STEP project, providing supervision and coordination of clinical staff and community health workers, and played a major role in establishing all of the grant procedures and programs.

## Spotlight on Our Partners



### **Brazos Valley Community Action Agency**

The community health centers that are part of the **Brazos Valley Community Action Agency** are important to C-STEP's clinical network for colonoscopy referral. With health centers in seven counties, their mission is to *"strive to eliminate health disparities by offering quality primary and preventive health care to the medically underserved of the Brazos Valley."* Their clinicians offer a wide range of services and programs to people without insurance, or with Medicaid and Medicare. The Brazos Transit System is another program of BVCAA, providing a much needed service to meet regional transportation needs and reduce a significant barrier to seeking preventive medical services, including colonoscopy.

*"I absolutely enjoy helping people obtain much needed screenings to maintain optimal health when they otherwise could not afford it. It is very rewarding". – Sonja Welch, RN.*

## Visit Our Website

<http://texascstep.org/>

## General Information

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## Referrals/Appointments

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[www.texasamphysicians.com](http://www.texasamphysicians.com)



## Facts about colorectal cancer

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- Colon cancer affects men and women equally.
- Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States.
- Colon cancer develops from polyps in the large bowel.
- Early screening and detection can prevent death from colon cancer.
- If everyone 50 years or older gets screened, the number of colon cancer-related deaths may be reduced by as much as 60%.

