

TEXAS C-STEP Newsletter

Cancer Screening, Training, Education & Prevention

Texas A&M Health Science Center

3/1/2015

Texas C-STEP Visits Brazos, Burleson, Leon and Madison Counties

Success in Numbers



In the first 39 months of Texas C-STEP's colonoscopy program:

- 1171 people were screened for colon cancer
- 881 people received free colon cancer screenings
 - 292 people had pre-cancerous polyps
 - 11 cancers were detected

In the first year of Texas C-STEP's Women's Health Grant:

- 223 women received free breast cancer screenings
- 102 women received free cervical cancer screenings
- Pre-cancerous tissue was detected in 12 women
- 1 breast cancer was detected

The Texas Cancer Screening, Training, Education and Prevention Program (Texas C-STEP) addresses barriers to colorectal, breast and cervical cancer screenings, such as cost, lack of education, or access to quality healthcare. Funded by grants from the Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT), the program is able to provide financial assistance for these screenings to uninsured or underinsured residents in the Brazos Valley region and beyond.



The Texas C-STEP team during a recent visit with CPRIT partners.

In January, Texas C-STEP was able to provide *another* mobile mammography day for uninsured women in Leon County; **18 more women received free mammograms!** Many thanks to those who helped spread the word and make this day a success: Centerville I.S.D., First Baptist Church, Carol's Pharmacy, Leon County newspapers, Leon County Health Resource Center, HealthPoint, Cowboy Church of Leon County, St. Leo the Great Church, and Agrilife Extension.

Nearly 500 Brazos Valley residents were also directly served through community outreach and education at Senior Renewal in Madisonville, Bryan Adult Learning Center, Clara Mounce Public Library in Bryan, Blinn Workforce, the Cowboy Church of Leon County, Progressive Missionary Baptist Church in Hearne, and Caldwell High School Community Resource Night.

The HPV Vaccine: Busting 5 of the Most Common Myths

More than 4,000 women lose their lives to cervical cancer each year. The leading cause of cervical cancer is human papillomavirus (HPV), which is also the most common sexually transmitted infection (STI). HPV is so common that it is estimated that almost half of all sexually active men and women will contract it at some point in their lives; and most people will never know they have been infected, unknowingly passing it to their partners.

Perhaps the largest part of this tragedy is that certain strains of HPV—the most aggressive strains that account for almost 70 percent of HPV-related cancers—can be prevented by vaccination.

While HPV vaccines that were approved by the Food and Drug Administration almost a decade ago are proven to reduce incidences of cervical cancer in women, as well as other forms of cancer in both men and women, many parents are still opting not to vaccinate their children. In fact, vaccination rates are as low as 37.6

percent for girls and 13.9 percent of boys who received all three recommended doses of the vaccine.

With myths about the vaccine at an all-time high, Trisha Sheridan, R.N., M.S.N., clinical assistant professor at the Texas A&M Health Science Center College of Nursing and a women's health nurse practitioner, unveils some of the most common misconceptions about the HPV vaccine.

Myth [1]: The HPV vaccine is just for girls

Fact: "The HPV vaccines are recommended for girls and boys, ages 11 and 12. While it's advertised that the vaccines protect against cervical cancer, they also prevent anal, penile and oral cancers caused by the HPV virus," Sheridan said. "It's especially important for boys to get, because there's no current screening for HPV in men. By the time they become aware of the virus, if they ever do, the damage might already be done."

There are currently two forms of the HPV vaccine: Cervarix and Gardasil. Gardasil is the only vaccine recommended for both genders.

Myth [2]: The vaccine protects against all strains of HPV and causes of cervical cancer

Fact: There are multiple strains of HPV—too many to completely protect everyone from. "The vaccine protects against the strains that cause a majority of HPV-related cancers and genital warts: HPV strains 6, 11, 16 and 18," Sheridan said.



Myth [3]: Only teenagers can get the vaccine

Fact: Even if your child (or yourself for that matter) didn't get the vaccine at the recommended age, Sheridan says that women could receive the vaccine until they're 26 and men until the age of 21.

"I still believe it's a good choice for young adults to get the vaccine, because it will protect them from this very common STI," she said.



Myth [4]: Women who received the vaccine don't need to get a Pap test

Fact: "Although the vaccines protect against the most common strains of HPV that can cause cervical cancer, they don't protect against *all* causes of cervical cancer. Getting a Pap test regularly is still necessary, because precancerous cells can still develop after receiving the vaccine. The best method of prevention, at that point, is catching those cells early and treating them," Sheridan said.

Myth [5]: Only sexually active people need protection against HPV

Fact: The vaccines are most effective when administered around the ages of 11 or 12. Pre-teens and teenagers are able to produce a more comprehensive immune response to the vaccines, leading to better protection.

"Pre-teens and young adults should both get the vaccine, because it will help prevent HPV-related cancers as well as protect them against this STI, in the event that they do become sexually active," Sheridan advised. "The vaccine isn't a license for teens and young adults to be sexually active, nor does it protect against all STI's, so proper sex-education is still necessary."

In the end, Sheridan notes, it's important to remember that it's all about preventing cancer in your child—specifically the prevention of [cervical] cancer.

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Author: Elizabeth Grimm



Texas C-STEP is able to provide free HPV vaccinations for women ages 18-26 who qualify financially. For more information, please call our Community Health Workers at

979.436.0443 (Rosa) or 979.436.0449 (Brenda)

Texas C-STEP Coming to a County Near you...

MARCH 14 – LEON COUNTY – COWBOYS FOR CHRIST @ CENTERVILLE

APRIL 1 – WASHINGTON COUNTY – SENIORS DAY @ BRENHAM

APRIL 14 – ROBERTSON COUNTY – **MOBILE MAMMOGRAPHY DAY** @ HEARNE

APRIL 24 – MADISON COUNTY – RELAY FOR LIFE @ MADISONVILLE

JUNE 3 – MADISON COUNTY – **MOBILE MAMMOGRAPHY DAY** @ MADISONVILLE

JUNE 4 – LEON COUNTY – MENDING FENCES @ CENTERVILLE

For more information, please contact Vanessa O'Neal at oneal@sph.tamhsc.edu or 979.436.9469.

Visit Our Website

<http://texascstep.org/>

General Information

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Services Available



- COLONOSCOPY
- CLINICAL BREAST EXAM
 - PAP TEST
- MAMMOGRAM
- COLPOSCOPY
- LOOP ELECTROSURGICAL EXCISION PROCEDURE (LEEP)
- ULTRASOUND GUIDED NEEDLE BIOPSY
- HPV VACCINATION FOR AGES 18-26
- ABDOMINAL/PELVIC CT SCAN

MARCH IS NATIONAL COLON CANCER AWARENESS MONTH!

If you would like to submit a request for Texas C-STEP personnel to speak at your next club meeting, corporate seminar, church group, senior center, or other venue about colorectal cancer prevention, please contact Vanessa O'Neal at oneal@sph.tamhsc.edu or 979.436.9469.



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