

2020 NPCR DELAWARE CANCER REGISTRY SUCCESS STORY

STORY TOPIC: Lung Cancer

STORY CATEGORY: Public Health Impact

STORY TITLE: Addressing the Lung Cancer Burden in Delaware

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SUMMARY

As the most frequently diagnosed cancer and the most common cause of cancer deaths in the United States and Delaware, lung cancer continues to account for a large share of the state's overall cancer cases. For 2012-2016, lung cancer accounted for 15 percent of all newly diagnosed cancer cases and 28 percent of all cancer deaths in Delaware. The Division of Public Health (DPH) continues to encourage providers to refer tobacco users to Delaware Quitline, the state's tobacco cessation program and lung cancer screening. The DPH Cancer Program also continues to educate Delawareans on the importance of tobacco cessation and lung cancer screening recommendations to reduce the lung cancer burden.

CHALLENGE

Lung cancer continues to account for an enormous share of Delaware's overall cancer burden. For the 2011-2015 time period, Delaware ranked 9th in the nation for lung cancer incidence. Further, during 2012-2016, lung cancer accounted for 15% of all newly diagnosed cancer cases and 28% of all cancer deaths in Delaware. Prior to January 2013, there were no U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) lung cancer screening recommendations. Unfortunately, most lung cancer cases continue to be diagnosed in the distant stage (i.e., when the cancer has spread from the primary site to distant tissues or organs or to distant lymph nodes). For the 2012-2016 time period, Delaware and the U.S. had a similar proportion of lung cancers diagnosed at distant stage (50% in Delaware and 52% in the United States). Additionally, treatment options that are effective for some other forms of cancer are not as effective for lung cancer.

SOLUTION

The State of Delaware has identified lung cancer as a priority and continues to work towards reducing the burden of lung cancer in Delawareans. As a part of reducing the burden, there is collaboration and a multi-disciplinary approach at different levels in order to enact change and address issues that contribute to the high rate of lung cancer in Delaware.

Lung cancer screening and tobacco prevention also continue to be priorities for the Department of Public Health. To prevent early access to tobacco products, the Delaware General Assembly passed new legislation in 2019, Senate Bill 25, to raise the legal age for sales of tobacco and tobacco products from 18 to 21. The new legislation also eliminates any penalty to those under 21 who are caught with tobacco products, and instead enforces penalties on the sellers if sold to anyone under the new legal buying age. To aid in smoking cessation,

Delaware launched the Delaware Quitline in 2001. It is equipped with trained tobacco specialists who assess the needs and explore the best options available to the caller.

Following the USPSTF lung cancer screening recommendation from 2013, the Delaware Cancer Consortium (DCC) and DPH's Comprehensive Cancer Control Program collaborated to implement a lung cancer screening program. As the research indicates, lung cancer screenings aid in early detections of lung cancer. DPH's Screening for Life Program (SFL) provides financial coverage for the screenings of individuals who meet eligibility criteria for lung cancer screening without insurance coverage otherwise. The SFL began covering lung cancer screenings for qualified Delawareans in 2015. The screening is available to current and former smokers deemed at high risk for lung cancer. Additionally, an educational campaign was implemented using a two-pronged approach. One piece was aimed at providers on the importance of referring eligible patients to low-dose CT scans and the other aimed at educating Delawareans on lung cancer screening including the availability of screening sites and a unique phone number for Delawareans who feel they meet the criteria to be navigated to lung cancer screening at the system closest to them. The navigators help schedule the screening and follow-up to ensure the screening is completed. If a diagnosis is made, they refer them to a cancer care coordinator in addition to the Delaware Cancer Treatment Program if uninsured/underinsured. To support these efforts, Governor John Carney also proclaimed April 2019 as Lung Cancer Screening Awareness Month in Delaware.

RESULTS

From 2011-2015 to 2012-2016 time periods, Delaware decreased its national lung cancer incidence ranking from 10th to 9th. From 2002-2006 to 2012-2016, lung cancer incidence rates declined 18% for Delaware males, compared to 24% for U.S. males. The lung cancer incidence rate for Delaware females decreased 9% during the same time period, compared to a 12% decline in the U.S. female rate. Lung cancer decreased by 13% in Delaware and 18% in the United States. Between 2002-2006 and 2012-2016, mortality rates for lung cancer decreased by 19% in Delaware and 22% in the United States.

Delaware saw slight increases in lung cancers diagnosed in the earlier stages before the cancer spreads to distant tissues, organs or lymph nodes and is more difficult to treat. Fifty percent of Delaware's lung cancers in 2012-2016 were diagnosed at distant stage, compared to 52 percent in the United States. From 1980-1984 to 2012-2016 in Delaware, the percent of lung cancer cases diagnosed at the local stage increased from 21% to 24% which was a larger percentage than the U.S. (20). The 2018 Delaware Behavioral Risk Factors Survey (BRFS) identified 31,035 Delawareans estimated to be eligible for lung cancer screening. Of those eligible, 20% reported having a CT or CAT scan for lung cancer and 23% (approximately 6,976 Delaware adults) reported having a CT or CAT scan for lung cancer for another reason other than screening.

Delaware has reaped the benefits of statewide reductions in tobacco use that began decades ago. During Fiscal Year 2019 (July 1 to June 30, 2019), the Delaware Quitline received 7,434 calls with 28% of callers receiving cessation counseling by phone and 8% of registrants to receive face-to-face counseling. According to the 2018 Delaware BRFS, current smoking trends may be predictive of cancer rates in the 2030s. In the 1980s (i.e., the period relevant to current lung cancer rates in terms of tobacco use behaviors), Delaware's smoking prevalence were among the highest in the country. Historical BRFS data show that in 1982, 30% of adult Delawareans smoked cigarettes. By 2018, Delaware's smoking rate among adults had declined to approximately 17%. There is no statistically significant difference in current smoking prevalence between males and females or non-Hispanic White and non-Hispanic African Americans. When smoking prevalence rates were stratified by age group, Delawareans 25-34 and 35-44 years of age reported the highest prevalence of current smoking (22% and 23%, respectively). This prevalence was statistically significantly higher

compared to that for Delawareans 65 years of age and older. The smoking prevalence decreased as education level and income increased. In recent years, tobacco use prevalence has leveled off among adult Delawareans, while continuing to decline among high school students.

SUSTAINING SUCCESS

Delaware is committed to sustaining the partnerships and collaborations established with multiple agencies, committees, facilities, programs and their engagement with the public. It is a priority to continue to increase lung cancer screening and early disease detection while reducing tobacco usage. By doing so, the Delaware Division of Public Health will continue to reduce the lung cancer burden in Delaware and implement evidence-based interventions to priority populations statewide using DCR data as a source in planning efforts.

REGISTRY CONTACT INFORMATION

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