

## Delaware's cancer mortality rate declines per latest data report

Cancer screening and early detection efforts continue to drive down Delaware's cancer death rates, say Division of Public Health (DPH) officials. *Cancer Incidence and Mortality in Delaware, 2011-2015* provides data for all cancer sites combined (all-site cancer) and eight site-specific cancer types: breast, colorectal, liver, lung, pancreatic, prostate, stomach, and urinary bladder.

Delaware ranks 18th among states for highest all-site cancer mortality in the 2011-2015 time period, an improvement compared to last year's ranking of 16<sup>th</sup>-highest for the 2010-2014 time period. The all-site mortality rate decreased 14 percent from 2001-2005 to 2011-2015, the same percentage decline seen nationally. The state's mortality rate (175.1 deaths per 100,000 people) was 7 percent higher than the U.S. rate of 163.5 for 2011-2015.

"We have made tremendous improvements over the years in helping Delawareans identify cancer earlier by encouraging cancer screenings, and accessing potentially life-saving treatment to improve opportunities for both short and long-term survival," said Governor John Carney. "I am particularly grateful for the strong partnership between the Delaware Cancer Consortium and Division of Public Health for coordinating our state's cancer advocacy efforts, along with the support of many stakeholders, health care organizations, and community champions."

Specific populations experienced notable decreases in all-site cancer mortality rates. Between the five-year periods of 2001-2005 and 2011-2015, the all-site mortality rate decreased by 30 percent among non-Hispanic African-American men, 19 percent among Caucasian men, and 7 percent among Hispanic men. Among women, there were decreases of 14 percent among African Americans, 13 percent among Caucasian women, and 4 percent decrease among Hispanic women.

Regarding incidence, or diagnosis of new cancer cases, Delaware's all-site cancer incidence rate decreased 3 percent from 2001-2005 (504.2 per 100,000) to 2011-2015 (495.3 per 100,000). The state's all-site cancer incidence rate in 2011-2015 was 13 percent higher than the comparable U.S. rate (439.2 per 100,000).

While Delaware is ranked second among states for all-site cancer incidence, this may be due, in part, to the state's continued increases in early detection



and screening. All-site cancer incidence fell 9 percent among men, decreasing by 15 percent among African-Americans, 9 percent among Hispanics, and 7 percent among Caucasians. It increased 3 percent in women.

Lung cancer, the most frequently diagnosed cancer in the U.S. and Delaware, accounted for 19 percent of all newly diagnosed cancer cases and 29 percent of all cancer deaths in Delaware from 2011-2015.

Liver cancer accounted for just 2 percent (506) of all newly diagnosed cancer cases from 2011-2015, but those cases represent a 75 percent increase compared to 2001-2005. A 44 percent increase in liver cancer deaths between the two periods is largely attributed to the hepatitis C virus, particularly in the baby boomer population, as well as alcohol use/abuse, smoking, and obesity. While there is no vaccine for the hepatitis C virus, screening, early identification, and treatment are effective.

"Liver cancer is one that can be prevented, and the power to do that is in everyone's hands," said DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay. "If we want to begin to reduce the number of new cancer cases and cancer deaths in our state, we have to ensure that injection drug users are not sharing dirty needles, increase efforts to get people to reduce their obesity risk, lower their alcohol consumption, and stop smoking tobacco. DPH is planning a more in-depth look at the geographic areas where these issues intersect in order to better direct prevention-focused resources to address this issue."

To view the full report, visit <https://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/dpc/files/iandm2011-2015.pdf>. DPH's secondary analysis of all-site cancer incidence rates by census tract is at [https://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/dpc/files/ct\\_analysis2011-2015\\_2019.pdf](https://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/dpc/files/ct_analysis2011-2015_2019.pdf).





Carly Aquino, left, and Bobbi Turner of the Delaware Public Health Laboratory handed out information on preventing rabies and giveaways at the Delaware Rabies Program's booth at the Delaware State Fair. Photo by Sean Dooley.

## DPH and DDA teach rabies prevention at the Delaware State Fair

DPH and the Delaware Department of Agriculture distributed rabies prevention information at the Delaware State Fair. Last year, a Kent County woman died from rabies, a deadly but preventable disease.

The rabies virus spreads primarily through the bite of an infected mammal, or if an infected animal's saliva gets directly into the eyes, nose, mouth or an open wound. It is transmitted from animals to humans or from animals to other animals and is fatal once symptoms develop. Bats, raccoons, foxes, skunks, dogs, cats, and ferrets can carry the rabies virus.

Follow these steps to prevent rabies:

- Have a licensed veterinarian vaccinate dogs, cats, and ferrets 6 months of age and older, as required by state law. Consider vaccinating livestock and horses.
- Don't feed or pet wild or stray animals, even if they appear friendly. Report strays to local authorities.
- Don't keep wild animals as pets.
- Keep pets under control. Wandering animals are more likely to be exposed to rabies.
- Do not allow food or water that is meant for outdoor pets to be accessible to other animals.
- Keep trash cans tightly closed.



Anyone who was bitten, scratched by, or came in close contact with a stray, wild, or unfamiliar animal, should: 1.) immediately wash the wound with soap and water; and 2.) see a health care provider for preventive treatment or, 3) call the DPH Rabies Program at 302-744-4995 (during business hours) or 1-888-295-5156 (outside of business hours).

For more information, visit

<http://www.dhss.delaware.gov/dhss/dph/dpc/rabies.html> or call the DPH Rabies Program at 302-744-4995 (during business hours) or 1-888-295-5156 (outside of business hours).

## Prepare for hurricanes now

September is the most active month for hurricanes. Prepare now with these tips from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security ([ready.gov](http://ready.gov)), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Delaware Emergency Management Agency (DEMA):

- Know your evacuation zone and route. Find shelter locations by downloading the FEMA app at <https://www.fema.gov/mobile-app>.
- Sign up for the Delaware Emergency Notification System on the DEMA website: <http://www.dema.delaware.gov/services/DENS.shtml>.
- Determine your home and workplace's safest places from high winds: a FEMA safe room, ICC 500 storm shelter, or a small, interior, windowless room on the lowest level of a sturdy building that should not flood.
- Learn your area's flood risk at <http://maps.dnrec.delaware.gov/FloodPlanning/default.html> and consider purchasing flood insurance. Review home and vehicle insurance policies.

• Complete the Delaware Department of Insurance's Home Inventory Form: <https://insurance.delaware.gov/wp-content/uploads/sites/15/2018/09/Home-Inventory-Form-2018.pdf>.

• Keep insurance, financial, medical, educational, and legal documents in a bank safety deposit box or create password-protected digital copies. To minimize financial impacts from disasters, read the Emergency Financial First Aid Kit at <https://www.fema.gov/media-library/assets/documents/96123>.



- Have a household emergency kit with food and bottled water for three days, medications, a flashlight, batteries, first aid supplies, and a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) weather radio. Checklists for humans and pets are at [http://www.dema.delaware.gov/services/disaster\\_prep.shtml](http://www.dema.delaware.gov/services/disaster_prep.shtml).
- Pack a "go bag" for each person, such as a backpack, with a complete change of clothes, extra socks, sturdy footwear, work gloves, a whistle, and contact numbers. Designate an out-of-state person as your family's contact person.
- Not all shelters accept pets; make arrangements.
- Keep your car in good working condition with the gas tank half full, and carry an emergency kit.
- Trim dead and weak branches from trees.
- If told to evacuate, grab your "go bag" and leave immediately. Tell family members your destination.
- Monitor local news and weather reports.