



News Release
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For Immediate Release

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Texas Cancer Council Awards Grant to Fight Colon Cancer on the South Plains

Lubbock - The Texas Cancer Council recently awarded a grant to the Lubbock Colon Cancer Prevention Task Force to help fight colorectal cancer on the South Plains. In 2005 the Task Force successfully competed for and received funds from the U.S. Center for Disease Control to be used for colon cancer control activities in Lubbock County. The new grant will help expand these efforts to counties of the South Plains.

Colon cancer is one of the most common cancers among men and women. Over the next ten years approximately 100,000 men and women in Texas will be diagnosed with colon cancer. Colon cancer will be fatal for 40,000 if something is not done. The fact is that over 90% of these cancers can be prevented from occurring, and most of the deaths could be avoided.

In 2003 Lubbock responded to these challenges and formed the Colon Cancer Prevention Task Force, under the auspices of the American Cancer Society, to work toward the elimination of colon cancer as a cause of illness and death in the community. The Lubbock Colon Cancer Demonstration Project was initiated with the goal of reducing age-adjusted colon cancer mortality in Lubbock County by 50% by 2008 and by 90% by 2011.

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The aim of the Task Force has been to develop a field validated model for an effective community-wide colorectal cancer control campaign that could be copied and implemented in other communities around the state. The Task Force planned, recruited, mobilized and coordinated activities with the numerous individuals and organizations in the campaign to reach these goals. The Texas Department of Health, under contract with the Task Force, is currently conducting the BRFSS Survey in Lubbock County. This survey will help determine what proportion of the population has been receiving colon screenings as a guide for further actions. The Texas Cancer Registry has been working with health facilities in the area to document the number of new cases and deaths from colorectal cancer, but this data will not be available for a while.

The Lubbock Colon Cancer Campaign has been extremely successful and has received several state and local level awards. The Lubbock Colon Cancer Prevention Task Force activities received statewide attention. Many around the state are looking at the Lubbock community as an example to others.

However, Dr. Davor Vugrin, FACP, Chairman of the Lubbock Colon Cancer Prevention Task Force and Director for the Lubbock Colon Cancer Demonstration Project, stated that much more work needs to be done to achieve the 2008 and 2011 objectives. "Every person and every organization in our community is essential to the solution of this problem, and working together, we can make colon cancer history."

For more information, contact Dr. Davor Vugrin at (806) 793-0988, or Robin Gardner, American Cancer Society Lubbock Office Health Initiatives Director at (806) 792-7128.