

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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February is National Cancer Prevention Month

Seven Hills, OH – With the observation of National Cancer Prevention Month in February, Ohio KePRO encourages healthcare providers and Medicare beneficiaries to remember the importance of preventive screenings as the most effective way to identify and treat cancer.

Breast cancer and colorectal cancer are two of the most common cancers in the U.S., and Medicare has prioritized screenings for both as part of its national healthcare quality improvement goals. Breast cancer is the second most common cancer among American women, second only to lung cancer as the leading cause of cancer death. The risk for breast cancer increases with age, with more than 65 percent of breast cancers occurring among women aged 55 or older.¹ An annual mammography is recommended for women aged 40 and older who are in good health. This 20-minute procedure is partly responsible for improved breast cancer survival rates, which have increased by 2 percent per year since 1991.²

Colorectal cancer is the fourth leading cause of death among men and women in the U.S., and is common among people aged 50 or older. Colorectal cancer screenings have been highly successful in early detection and treatment, and are recommended annually for men and women aged 50 and older who are at average risk for colorectal cancer. Individuals should consult their doctors to determine the most appropriate screening schedule for their level of risk.

Below are some cancer statistics, taken from the most recent available information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³

- 1,342,126 new cancer cases were diagnosed in the U.S. in 2004, including 54,925 in Ohio.
- 553,880 cancer deaths occurred in the U.S. in 2004, including 24,940 in Ohio.
- 40,954 American women died of breast cancer in 2004, including 1,888 in Ohio.
- 53,580 men and women died of colorectal cancer in 2004, including 2,479 in Ohio.

As Ohio's Medicare Quality Improvement Organization, Ohio KePRO offers tools and resources for Medicare beneficiaries and healthcare providers in taking preventive measures against breast cancer and colorectal cancer at www.ohiokepro.com.

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About Ohio KePRO

Ohio KePRO, the Quality Improvement Organization for Medicare in Ohio, is committed to continuous quality improvement in healthcare through the provision of innovative products and services provided at no charge to healthcare providers and Ohio's 1.8 million Medicare beneficiaries. Visit Ohio KePRO's Web site at www.ohiokepro.com for more information. Media inquiries can also be submitted online at www.ohiokepro.com/media.asp/.

For More Information Contact:

Sue Garlando, Marketing & Communications Supervisor
(216) 447-9604 ext. 2209
sgarlando@ohqio.sdps.org

¹ National Cancer Institute. *Incidence – Age Distribution of Incidence Cases by Site, 1998-2002*. Available at http://seer.cancer.gov/cgi-bin/csr/1975_2002/search.pl#results. Accessed April 1, 2008.

² National Cancer Institute. *Breast Cancer (PDQ): Screening Health Professional Version, 2005*. Available at <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/pdq/screening/breast/healthprofessional/allpages>. Accessed January 4 2008.

³ U.S. Cancer Statistics Working Group. *United States Cancer Statistics: 1999–2004 Incidence and Mortality Web-based Report*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Cancer Institute; 2007. Available at: www.cdc.gov/uscs. Accessed January 9, 2009.