



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Prostate Cancer Screening Could Save Your Life

JOHN A. DEFRANCISCO September 23, 2009

| ISSUE: **HEALTH**

Because prostate cancer kills so many of its victims, September has been designated Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. It is a treatable and curable disease if caught early enough, yet every 17 minutes a husband, father, son brother, grandfather, uncle, or friend dies from this disease.

Most men are not aware that 33 percent more likely to get prostate cancer than women are to get breast cancer. Of the almost 219,000 cases that are diagnosed this year more than 27,000 will die because they did not get an examination soon enough.

Regular screenings are essential because prostate cancer often develops without symptoms, and it can spread if it is not detected early. Men with strong family histories of cancer are particularly at risk for this disease. Also, the chance of developing prostate cancer increases exponentially with age, making the screening for prostate cancer especially important for men older than fifty.

The good news is that the five-year survival rate for men who are diagnosed early is nearly 100 percent. Many programs and treatments are available today that give patients the ability to achieve long-term remission.

A national organization, Zero Cancer was established with the goal of eliminating prostate cancer deaths. They organize fundraising and awareness events, conduct advocacy campaigns, and provide funding for research. They also have a mobile unit that tours the United States providing free prostate cancer screenings. To learn more about this organization, visit their Web site www.zerocancer.org.

Prostate cancer has taken the lives of too many men in our community, and we must continue to work toward a cure. However, it is very important for men to be proactive and get regular screenings to detect the disease early so those who are diagnosed can have the best prognosis possible.