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DHHR Releases Statistical Briefs on Cancer Prevalence and Survivorship in WV

Two statistical briefs on cancer prevalence and survivorship have been released by the Department of Health and Human Resources Bureau for Public Health. The new brief is entitled *Health Statistics Center Statistical Brief No. 26 Update: Cancer Prevalence and Survivorship in West Virginia, 2010*. Also available on the website is *Health Statistics Center Statistical Brief No. 26: Cancer Prevalence and Survivorship in West Virginia, 2009*. Both utilize new Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System data first collected from cancer survivors in 2009 and again in 2010. Prior to this, there was no standardized data source for information about survivors of cancer in the state.

Bureau for Public Health Commissioner Marian L. Swinker, MD, MPH, stated, "This new data source has allowed us to determine that 1 in 12 adults in West Virginia are cancer survivors. This means approximately 124,000 adults in the state had cancer at some point in their life."

These briefs document gender, age, income, and education differences in cancer prevalence, the most common types of cancer, behavioral risk factors engaged in by cancer survivors, co-morbid conditions, enrollment in clinical trials, health care coverage and issues affecting cancer survivors such as pain management. Data analysis results indicate that the burden of cancer prevalence is carried by women, the elderly and those with low socio-economic status.

West Virginia cancer survivors most often reported diagnosis with skin cancer other than melanoma. Other common types of cancer among survivors include breast, cervical, prostate, melanoma and colorectal cancers.

Cancer survivors in the state have lived an average of 12 years after their cancer diagnosis. The data also indicate that only 5 percent of survivors have participated in a clinical trial for cancer treatment.

The information contained in these statistical briefs is used by the West Virginia Comprehensive Cancer Program in the Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Division to plan, implement and evaluate evidence based interventions focusing on cancer survivorship issues. The statewide cancer coalition, Mountains of Hope, uses this information to update the *West Virginia Cancer Plan* and set new objectives for the plan. The HSC briefs are online at www.wvdhhr.org/bph/hsc/statserv/Pub.asp?ID=137 and www.wvdhhr.org/bph/hsc/statserv/Pub.asp?ID=153.