



## October 2011 Update

*VTAAC provides a forum for collaboration, engagement and sharing of resources for individuals and organizations concerned about cancer in Vermont.*

### **Welcome!**

This is the twenty-first edition of our quarterly newsletter. We are presenting this update to the many members of our coalition to provide news, plans and other information. If you have any questions or information to be shared, please contact our coordinator, **David Cranmer**, at [info@vtaac.org](mailto:info@vtaac.org), or 802-872-6303.

### **Thank You Onolee!**

In August, **Onolee Bock** accepted a promotion as Oral Health Program Manager at the Department of Health. Onolee joined the comprehensive cancer control program as the state coordinator last August. In that time she has been able to update the State Cancer Plan and provide new directions for VTAAC's workgroups and task forces.

Onolee will be assisting VTAAC and the Cancer Plan during the transition period.

From Onolee:

“VTAAC is an amazing organization filled with passionate, dedicated people. It has truly been a pleasure to work with all of you over the past year. While my promotion in the health department will take me away from day to day work in the field of cancer, I look forward to future opportunities for collaboration in my new role with the oral health program.”

### **VTAAC Hosts Two Cancer Summits**

In September, VTAAC hosted its 3<sup>rd</sup> Prostate Cancer Summit. Held at the ACS offices in Williston, 22 members met to discuss support for men with prostate cancer; a VDH presentation on prostate cancer in Vermont; updates on testing and treatments from a panel of doctors, as well as plans for having a prostate cancer awareness day in Vermont.

In October, VTAAC hosted its 2<sup>nd</sup> Breast Cancer Summit as part of the Annual Breast Cancer Conference, presented by the Vermont Cancer Center at the Sheraton in Burlington. Attendees heard a presentation on Breast Cancer in Vermont and the new VTAAC Women's Health Workgroup was introduced.

These summits give an opportunity for VTAAC members to learn more about cancer and the activities happening around the state to reduce the burden of cancer.

For more information contact us at [info@vtaac.org](mailto:info@vtaac.org).

## **New Alignment for VTAAC Activities**

At the July 2011 VTAAC Steering Committee Meeting, it was agreed that the current organizational structure for VTAAC would be changed to more closely reflect the goals and objectives of the 2015 Vermont State Cancer Plan. Our new structure will include both workgroups and taskforces. A **workgroup** is a group that is charged with developing strategies to implement long-term Plan goals and will meet on a regular basis. A **taskforce** is a group with specific short-term objectives that will meet a limited number of times to address these objectives. Both groups will report to the VTAAC Steering Committee.

Here is the new structure:

### Workgroups

**Advocacy/Policy.** This is a new group created by the Steering Committee. Goal is to address national, state, and local policy issues and develop strategies to address these issues as they relate to the Cancer Plan.

**Colorectal Cancer.** This is an established workgroup. Goal is to develop strategies to achieve Cancer Plan Goal (#6) for increasing colorectal cancer screening and reducing the number of late-stage colorectal cancer diagnoses.

**Quality of Life.** This is an established workgroup that is charged with developing strategies to achieve the Quality of Life Goals (#10-15) in the Cancer Plan.

**Women's Health.** This is a new group created by the Steering Committee to expand the work of the VTAAC Cervical Cancer workgroup to include all cancers diagnosed in women. Goal is to determine how to coordinate activities and resources that meet the Cancer Plan's goals for breast and cervical cancers. (Goals #1, 4 & 5).

### Taskforces

**Blueprint.** Established group created by the Steering Committee to address integrating Cancer Plan's screening and survivorship goals with the Blueprint's Community Health Teams and Health Information Exchange.

**Evaluation.** This is a new group created by the Steering Committee to address working with a consultant to create an evaluation plan for the Cancer Plan and Plan-related activities.

For more information contact us at [info@vtaac.org](mailto:info@vtaac.org).

## **Publications from the Vermont Department of Health**

The VDH announced the release of the updated *Cervical Cancer in Vermont* document. Changes to the 13-page document include: updated statistics, a new section on the HPV vaccine and Vermont and national intervention efforts. This document is available on-line at: <http://healthvermont.gov/prevent/cancer/documents/SiteSpecificCervical.pdf>

Also just released is the *2011 Vermont State Cancer Plan Status Report*. This report shows baselines, current results and goals for 38 of the goals and objectives in the State Cancer Plan. This report will be available on-line at [www.vtaac.org](http://www.vtaac.org).

## **A National Resource for People Living With Cancer**

The financial costs that come with a cancer diagnosis can often be overwhelming. **CancerCare** is a member of the **Cancer Financial Assistance Coalition (CFAC)**, a group of organizations that help cancer patients and their loved ones manage the financial challenges of cancer. Visit [www.cancerfac.org](http://www.cancerfac.org) for an up-to-date database of organizations that offer financial help to people with cancer.

## **Commission On Cancer Standards to be Effective starting in 2012**

*(From the American College of Surgeons)*

A patient-centered approach is at the forefront of new accreditation standards for hospital cancer programs released today by the **Commission on Cancer (CoC) of the American College of Surgeons**.

The new CoC standards ensure that key elements of quality cancer care are provided to every person with cancer treated in a CoC-accredited facility throughout their diagnosis and treatment process, as well as psychosocial support, care for cancer-related pain, palliative and hospice care.

Three key areas of patient-centered treatment and include:

- \* *A patient navigation process* to address health care disparities and barriers to care.
- \* *Screening patients for psychosocial distress.*
- \* *A survivorship care plan* that documents care received and seeks to improve cancer survivors' quality of life.

Additionally, new patient-centered standards have been developed that require accredited programs to offer patients *palliative care* (either on site or by referral) and *genetic services* (either on site or by referral by a qualified genetics professional).

Promoting the highest level of quality cancer care has always been the foundation for Commission on Cancer standards, and the new 2012 standards contain new quality requirements. Of particular note is a new standard that requires CoC programs to reach specific performance levels on measuring quality for treating patients with breast, colon, and rectal cancers. These “quality measures” are defined by the Commission on Cancer and endorsed by the National Quality Forum. The CoC, through its National Cancer Data Base (NCDB), has the only system available in the United States to apply these quality measures and feed data back to its programs to evaluate how they are performing. This system in turn allows them to develop a cancer care program that renders care along a continuum of continuous quality improvement.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.facs.org/cancer>

### **November is National Family Caregivers Month.**

Day in and day out, more than 65 million family caregivers in this country fulfill a vital role on the care team. No one else is in a better position to ensure continuity of care. Family caregivers are the most familiar with their care recipients' medicine regimen; they are the most knowledgeable about the treatment regimen; and they understand best the dietary and exercise regimen.

The **National Family Care Association (NFCA)** coordinates **National Family Caregivers Month** as a time to thank, support, educate and empower family caregivers. Celebrating Family Caregivers during NFC month enables us to:

- Celebrate the efforts of family caregivers
- Raise awareness of family caregiver issues
- Educate family caregivers about self-identification
- Increase support for family caregivers

For more information, visit: [www.thefamilycaregiver.org/national\\_family\\_caregiver\\_month/](http://www.thefamilycaregiver.org/national_family_caregiver_month/)

## **The Great American Smokeout is Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup>**

This **American Cancer Society** event was created to raise awareness of the importance of not smoking or using tobacco products and to encourage all smokers to set aside one day to quit smoking, with the hope that they will find and use the resources to quit completely.

Tobacco use remains the world's most preventable cause of death. Each year, 830 Vermonters will die of smoking-related diseases.

Research shows that much of the risk of premature death from smoking could be prevented by quitting. Smokers who quit, regardless of age, live longer than people who continue to smoke. Smokers who quit reduce their risk of lung cancer – ten years after quitting, the lung cancer death rate is about half that of a continuing smoker's. Quitting also lowers the risk for other major diseases including heart disease and stroke.

The **Vermont Quit Network** has many ways to help smokers quit.

- **Quit Online** using the web site <http://www.vtquitnetwork.org/quit-online> which offers a variety of tools and online support.
- **Quit In Person** using coaches available for group or individual help at each Vermont hospital. Local contacts are available at: <http://www.vtquitnetwork.org/quit-in-person>
- **Quit By Phone** by calling 1-800-QUITNOW to link to a coach who will work with you over the phone.

For more information, or to join the American Cancer Society Great American Smokeout, contact **Justin Pentenrieder**, community executive for Health Initiatives at 802-872-6398. Or visit: <http://www.cancer.org/smokeout>.

## **Cancer Survivor Community Study Update**

*(From the Vermont Cancer Center)*

Funded by the National Cancer Institute, the **Vermont Cancer Survivor Community Study** is one of the first community-based research studies of its type in the country. A team of cancer survivors, UVM researchers, statisticians and cancer registrars, have been working on the project for the past three years.

The first phase of the community study looked at whether Vermont cancer survivors would be interested in participating in research. As a result of that project – which focused on Franklin, Lamoille, Washington and Chittenden counties – 2,005 survivors agreed to participate and be part of a cancer survivor registry.

For the second phase, a 12-page survey was mailed to the participants in the study to gather information about survivors' needs and unmet needs. The purpose is to use the research to improve services and support for Vermont cancer survivors.

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## **Cancer Survivor Community Study (from Page 4)**

While results are preliminary, the study found that survivors' needs and unmet needs were related to factors such as age, sex, type of cancer, number of treatments, and education.

When looking at where the unmet needs were, 30 percent of respondents said they had unmet needs in the area of emotional, social and spiritual support; 25 percent said information; 23 percent said physical issues; 18 percent said access to care and services; and 14 percent said economic and legal issues.

A closer look found a need for greater coordination of care, and more information about side effects and after-effects of treatment, as well as about complementary and alternative medicine. For more information, contact Dr. Berta Geller at [berta.geller@uvm.edu](mailto:berta.geller@uvm.edu)

## **VTAAC Advocacy Update**

*(From the VTAAC Advocacy/Policy Workgroup)*

As we move forward into the era of national and Vermont health care reform, VTAAC members will be asked to play a larger role in ensuring that we do not lose any of the benefits we have gained. The following was presented at the September Steering Committee meeting.

### **The Difference between Lobbying and Not Lobbying**

Lobbying – Any attempt to influence any legislation through communication with a legislator or government official that refers to specific legislation and reflects a view on such legislation.

#### **Not Lobbying**

- Meeting with a legislator to discuss social problem, without mentioning a specific proposal
- Providing a legislator with educational materials about a specific piece of legislation, without calling for specific action on the legislation
- Responding to a request from a legislative committee for information about a specific piece of legislation
- Tracking activities of legislators, including votes, positions taken, contributions | accepted, etc.
- Talking to the media
- Advocating for better enforcement of existing laws
- Conducting public education campaigns
- Producing and disseminating research reports or studies that provide nonpartisan analysis on policy issues, including specific legislative issues
- Advocating the enactment and enforcement of private or voluntary policies, (e.g. alcohol purchase restrictions in stadiums)
- A newsletter to your own members providing info about a specific piece of legislation, but NOT a specific call to action.

For more information, contact us at [info@vtaac.org](mailto:info@vtaac.org).

## Every Vermonter Can Take Action Against Cancer!

- Avoid all tobacco products and second-hand smoke.
- Support smoke-free environments.
- Eat a nutritious and balanced diet and maintain a healthy weight.
- Increase your daily physical activity.
- Have your home checked for radon gas.
- Talk to your health care provider about appropriate cancer screenings.
- Volunteer with your hospital, health department, faith community or local groups that support cancer control efforts.

### 2011-12 Cancer Awareness Calendar

**November is** National Family Caregivers Month  
National Hospice Awareness Month  
National Childhood Cancer Awareness Month  
National Lung Cancer Awareness Month  
National Marrow Donor Awareness Month  
National Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month

**January is** National Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

### Save the Dates

- **Navigating Serious Illness: The Role of Palliative Care**  
Tuesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>, 7:00-8:30pm, United Methodist Church, S. Burlington  
Presented by the Madison-Deane Initiative, 802-860-4419
- **Survivorship Health Fair,**  
Saturday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 12:00 – 3:30 pm. PT360, 426 Industrial Ave, Williston  
Presented by the EB Daniels Fund, 802-860-4360.
- **Vermont Clinical & Translational Research Symposium**  
Thursday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, UVM Davis Center, Burlington  
Presented by the Vermont Cancer Center, 802-656-2176
- **Great American Smokeout**  
Thursday, November 17<sup>th</sup>, Across the Nation,  
[www.cancer.org/smokeout](http://www.cancer.org/smokeout)