Information on Cervical Cancer

Human papillomavirus (HPV) associated cancers are estimated to affect 21,300 women and 12,100 men annually; HPV causes nearly all cervical cancers and about 4,000 women die from the disease each year.

Facts

- All women are at risk for cervical cancer. It occurs most often in women over age 30.
- Hispanic women have higher incidence rates of cervical cancer, but Black women have a greater mortality rate (4.5 per 100,000).
- Nearly 28% of female respondents to the CDC’s 2010 National Health Interview Survey did not schedule follow-up exams for abnormal Pap test results due to costs/no insurance.

Risk Factors

- Smoking
- Having HIV
- Birthing three or more children

Prevention

- Starting at the age of 21, all women should begin receiving a pap smear at least every two years
- The HPV vaccine is recommended for those younger than 65 years of age
- Limiting the number of sex partners and using condoms is effective.

Symptoms

- Women should ask their doctor if they notice anything unusual such as vaginal bleeding or discharge

Screening

- A pelvic exam is the screening method currently available. A pap smear and HPV test are usually conducted during the exam.

Diagnosis

- If a woman is diagnosed with cancer by her gynecologist, the next step is most likely a referral to an oncologist for additional tests and a treatment plan.

Treatment

- Sometimes cervical cancer can be removed surgically, or minimized or eliminated using chemotherapy (pills or IV drugs) or radiation therapy (gamma or X-rays that destroy cancerous cells).

- While the number of female PHPC patients has increased by nearly 18%, the number of Pap Tests performed at PHPCs has only increased by about 2%.
- According to the CDC, 76.2% of female respondents to the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) reported having had a Pap Test no more than 3 years ago.