



Status:

Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Arkansas, and, if current trends continue, cancer may become the leading cause of death within the next decade, surpassing the current number one cause – cardiovascular disease. Arkansas has enjoyed impressive declines in cardiovascular and stroke death rates over the past 30 years, but this is not true for cancer deaths. It is estimated that in 2008, almost 15,000 new cancers were diagnosed in Arkansas, including about 1,800 breast cancers, 1,700 colorectal cancers, 2,000 prostate cancers and 130 cervical cancers. It is also estimated that in 2008, 6,350 people died of cancer in Arkansas, including 580 from colorectal cancer, 410 from breast cancer, 360 from prostate cancer, and 140 from ovarian cancer. Unfortunately, an Arkansan of any age today is more likely to die a cancer death than was true in 1970 or in any other year until the present. Regrettably, the incidence of cancer in Arkansas has increased despite a sharp drop in tobacco use. The issues in cancer control are complex and Arkansas must look carefully at a comprehensive approach to control cancer if these unwanted trends are to be reversed. The Arkansas Cancer Coalition has developed such a plan.

Program:

- The Arkansas Cancer Coalition:
 - Is Arkansas's statewide comprehensive cancer control partnership comprised of over 600 individuals representing 200 organizations.
 - Unites the state's doctors, hospitals, governmental agencies, public health services, community health groups and survivors around a common goal: to reduce the number of cancer-related deaths in Arkansas.
 - Is a 501(c) 3 non-profit organization, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, through a grant to the Arkansas Department of Health and a grant from Master Tobacco Settlement funds through the Arkansas Department of Health.
 - Is a nationally recognized coalition which, in November 2008, was awarded the prestigious "Exemplary Comprehensive Cancer Control Implementation Award" from C-Change, a national organization comprised of the nation's key cancer leaders from government, business and nonprofit sectors, and presented by President and Mrs. George H.W. Bush.
- The Coalition's recently updated Arkansas Cancer Plan:
 - Is based on an enhanced understanding of cancer, gained from years of experience working with stakeholder organizations in the state;
 - Reflects a science-based assessment of emerging needs, and new issues in cancer prevention, detection and care;
 - Promotes the use of evidence-based strategies to promote cancer prevention and control.
 - Addresses decreasing tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke, promoting cancer prevention and healthy lifestyles through nutrition and physical activity, promoting and encouraging protective behaviors from the sun and UV exposure, and screening, detecting and treating breast, cervical, ovarian, colorectal and prostate cancers based on accepted recommendations and guidelines.

Impact:

- Reduce the burden of cancer among all Arkansans.
- Reduce the disparate burden of cancer among underserved populations.
- Coordinate cancer prevention and reduction efforts through organization and community partners.
- Increase awareness about measures to reduce the risk of cancer through prevention, early detection and treatment among the general public and health professionals.

How it Works:

- Through the Arkansas Cancer Plan, the Coalition addresses prevention, screening and detection, treatment disparities, clinical trials, workforce development, survivorship, professional education, surveillance and evaluation.
- The Arkansas Cancer Coalition's Board of Directors, who represent the Coalition's membership, prioritize short and long term initiatives to address the goals, strategies and objectives recommended in the plan. Current Board membership includes representatives from the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, the Fay W. Boozman College of Public Health, the American College of Surgeons, Community Health Centers, the American Cancer Society, the Clinton School of Public Service, the Central Arkansas Veterans Healthcare System, the Arkansas Prostate Cancer Foundation, Cancer Survivors and the Arkansas Department of Health.
- The Arkansas Cancer Coalition's staff develops an annual plan to implement and evaluate coalition priorities. Current activities include public and professional education, assessment of health disparities among those who are diagnosed with colorectal cancer, tobacco control and prevention, and development of an evaluation plan.