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Dickinson-Iron District Health Department Promotes Cancer Control and Prevention in October

Kingsford and Iron River, Michigan, October 2016 – Local health departments across the state have designated October as Cancer Prevention and Control Month.

“Cancer is the second leading cause of death among Americans, exceeded only by heart disease,” said Barb Peterson, Women’s Health Nurse Practitioner. “While breast cancer awareness is typically promoted in October, we need to take this opportunity to educate Dickinson and Iron County residents about other cancer screening services and resources available to them, as we are always working to promote healthy lifestyles.”

Regular screening and examinations by a health care provider can result in the prevention of cervical and colorectal cancers through the discovery and removal of precursor lesions. Screening can detect cancers of the breast, colon, rectum, cervix, prostate, and oral cavity, and skin at earlier stages when treatment is more likely to be successful. Cancers that can be prevented or detected earlier by screening account for about half of all new cancer cases.

In 2014, about 585,720 Americans are expected to die of cancer, about 1,600 people per day. 176,000 of these estimated deaths will be caused by tobacco use. Cancer is the second most common cause of death in the U.S., exceeded only by heart disease, accounting for nearly 1 of every 4 deaths.

In 2014, the American Cancer Society estimated that 58,610 new cancer cases in Michigan were diagnosed (up from 57,560 in 2013) with 20,800 cancer deaths occurring in our state (slightly up from 20,570 in 2013).

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among American women, except for skin cancers. About 1 in 8 (12%) women in the US will develop invasive breast cancer during their lifetime. Death rates from breast cancer have been dropping since 1989, with larger decreases in women younger than 50. These decreases are believed to be the result of finding breast cancer earlier through screening and increased awareness, as well as better treatment options. Women are encouraged to keep up with regular self-exams and mammography screening according to their age and risk factors, and guidance from their primary care provider.

At this time, there is only one vaccination available that can prevent certain forms of cancer. The Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine aids in the prevention of cervical, anal, oropharyngeal (mouth and/or throat), vaginal, and penile cancer that can be caused by the Human Papillomavirus. It is ideal that children between the ages of 11 or 12 begin the HPV vaccination series; starting these vaccinations at this time allow for proper immunities to build prior to potential exposures to this virus. As of October 2016, the CDC (Center for Disease Control and Prevention) recommends that this series be completed in two doses separated by 6-12 months.

Smoking is the leading risk factor for lung cancer. The best way to prevent lung cancer is not to smoke and to avoid all exposure to secondhand smoke. The Michigan Tobacco Quit Line (1-800-QUIT-NOW) provides free tobacco cessation counseling services to all Michigan residents. In addition, some may be eligible for free nicotine replacement therapy aides such as patches or gum, particularly the uninsured.

For more information about cancer prevention and control resources, please contact your local Health Department or visit www.michigan.gov/cancer, www.michigancancer.org, www.cancer.org, or www.cancer.gov.