



## **News from the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Somerset County Cancer Coalition Recognizes January As Cervical Health Awareness Month**

**SOMERVILLE** – January is cervical health awareness month and the Somerset County Cancer Coalition is urging all women to become informed about early detection to decrease their risk for infections and cervical cancer.

The good news about cervical cancer is that it can be prevented with a simple pelvic exam and a pap test. A pap test is simple, quick and can detect cervical cancer at an early stage to avoid further extensive or invasive cancers. The test can be performed in your doctor's office or at a health clinic by qualified healthcare practitioners.

Cervical cancer occurs most often in women over the age of 40. The number of cervical cancer cases and deaths has decreased over the past several decades. Both African-American and Hispanic women have higher rates of cervical cancer than white women. Most women diagnosed with cervical cancer have not had recent pap tests.

The best way to prevent cervical cancer is to delay first sexual intercourse if you are young; have fewer sexual partners; quit smoking or avoid secondhand smoke; use a condom if you are sexually active; avoid long-term use of contraceptives; have testing (including a pap test) to detect HPV and pre-cancers; and get the HPV vaccine if you are under 27. See [www.cdc.gov/vaccines](http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines) for complete recommendations, questions and answers. For cervical cancer screening guidelines, visit [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

"It's important to take advantage of early-detection screenings and to follow the guidelines for preventing cervical cancer," said Somerset County Freeholder Mark Caliguire, county health department liaison. "Start now to become an educated healthcare consumer and advocate for you own health. It is critical for women to establish a 'medical home base' and a relationship with a physician to achieve optimal health."

If you are uninsured, underinsured or have other barriers to medical care, or to find out about eligibility for low-cost or reduced-cost medical care, including exams and the HPV vaccine, visit [www.womenandhealth.org](http://www.womenandhealth.org) or call the Women's Health and Counseling Center at 908-526-2335.

The Somerset County Cancer Coalition is made possible by a grant from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services' Office of Cancer Control and Prevention. For more information on the Coalition, to become a member or learn more about available cancer resources or screening locations, dates, times and eligibility, contact Cancer Coalition Coordinator Lucille Y-Talbot at 908-203-6077 or email [ytalbot@co.somerset.nj.us](mailto:ytalbot@co.somerset.nj.us)

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