

Overview of CDC's Prostate Cancer Activities

Background

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), an agency within the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), is the nation's public health protection agency, working to safeguard Americans from health and safety threats. It is responsible for providing credible information to support health decisions and for promoting health through strong partnerships. The CDC is organized into a number of centers, institutes, and offices, some focused on specific public health challenges (e.g., injury prevention, chronic disease) and others focused on general public health capabilities (e.g., surveillance and laboratory services). About seventy percent of the CDC's annual \$8B budget provides grants to state, local, municipal, tribal, and foreign governments and academic and non-profit entities. It has few regulatory responsibilities, instead issuing voluntary guidelines for the public health community.

In addition to the very public work of CDC staff around the world in response to public health emergencies, the CDC also promotes quality of life and prevention of leading causes of disease, injury, disability, and death through programs that provide Americans with the essential health information and tools they need to make informed decisions to protect and advance their health. CDC scientists collect and analyze health data, determining how health threats affect specific populations, issuing reports for health professionals and patients alike on all manner of disease and injury, and conducting public awareness campaigns to help inform the public about key health information.

Prostate Cancer Activities

The CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion has eight divisions and offices that carry out its work, including the Division of Cancer Prevention and Control, which runs the National Comprehensive Cancer Control Program (NCCCP). The Chronic Disease Center has no designated prostate cancer program, but some activities of the NCCCP awardees and within the Division's work are specific to prostate cancer. The CDC's prostate cancer funding supports communication initiatives, applied research and analysis, surveillance, and prostate cancer activities in the NCCCP. According to the CDC, providers are often unaware of current guidelines concerning prostate cancer counseling and do not adequately inform patients of the risks and benefits of screening. As such, many of the CDC's research and surveillance activities have focused on enhancing knowledge of effective prostate cancer communication and intervention, such as efforts related to informed decision-making around screening and treatment.

The CDC's funding for **prostate cancer communication** supports the agency's work with partner organizations to research pertinent questions and promote messages that may benefit men at risk for prostate cancer, prostate cancer patients and their families, and providers. The CDC develops prostate cancer materials, which are released in print and web formats. These materials require consistent, evidence-based updating and are widely used by providers and advocacy groups to promote informed decision-making and open discussion between patients and providers. A few years ago, the CDC, working with ZERO and other groups, launched "Nathan," an interactive avatar simulation decision aid focusing on prostate cancer screening and treatment decisions. More recently, the CDC has been creating a digital prostate cancer resource center for easier and more widely disseminated materials. As part of this process, the CDC will create new materials based on the identified needs of the patient, caregiver, and provider communities. As part of its dissemination of information, the CDC is actively engaged with USPSTF, providing surveillance and other data to the Task Force as it updates its PSA screening recommendation this year.

The CDC's funding for **prostate cancer applied research and analysis** supports and conducts research on prostate cancer across a wide spectrum of public health topics, ranging from early detection with prostate-specific antigen screening to prostate cancer survivorship. Examples of current topics of special interest include:

- Analysis of surveillance data to assess the impact of U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommendations (and changes in recommendations) on prostate cancer screening and shared decision-making;
- Development and evaluation of a decision aid to promote active surveillance management for men with low-grade, local-stage prostate cancer;
- Follow-up of needs of long-term prostate cancer survivors and their spouses; and,
- Studies of prostate cancer incidence and survival by demographic and tumor characteristics to assess prostate cancer burden and identify racial and ethnic disparities.

The CDC's **surveillance funding** is used to monitor trends in prostate cancer incidence, enhance prostate cancer data quality in cancer registries, and conduct research on the stage of disease at the time of diagnosis, the race and ethnicity of men with prostate cancer, and patterns of care for prostate cancer treatment. This work is done through the United States Cancer Statistics and the National Program of Cancer Registries programs.

The CDC's funding for **the NCCCP** is used to bring together cancer coalitions to identify the burden of cancer, set priorities for action, and develop and implement cancer plans to address the burden. A total of 19 grantees have developed and implemented specific activities related to prostate cancer in the most recent reporting years of the cooperative agreement (2012–2023),

including in Arizona, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Mexico, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Missouri, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

In addition to the Chronic Disease Center's prostate cancer activity funding, the CDC's Healthy People 2030 initiative includes one prostate cancer-specific goal: to "reduce the prostate cancer death rate."

Prostate Cancer Public Awareness

The CDC conducts education and outreach and regularly develops educational materials for state and local public health agencies, health care providers, and the general public. Health education is a component of almost all of CDC's programs related to specific diseases and health issues. Currently, the CDC has many ongoing awareness campaigns, including some that are designed to:

- Inform seniors about injury prevention
- Increase HIV testing, prevention, and treatment
- Raise awareness of urgent maternal warning signs during and after pregnancy
- Help Americans understand their risk for prediabetes

ZERO has developed a strong working relationship with the CDC. Through that engagement, ZERO has grown to better understand the work that could be done if the CDC had funding for prostate cancer outreach. Since FY20, we have been able to secure an additional \$2 million a year for CDC to undertake new initiatives to increase outreach, education, and resources for men at high risk of developing prostate cancer, including African-American men. This funding has allowed the CDC to work with and support appropriate governmental and non-governmental organizations to develop and disseminate additional information about prostate cancer.