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NEWS RELEASE

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

September is Prostate Cancer Awareness Month, a perfect time for men to talk to their health care providers about their risks for prostate cancer.

“Although prostate cancer remains the second most common cancer among American men – second only to skin cancer – the good news is that fewer men are dying from the disease,” said Sue Smith, Deputy Director of the Otsego County Department of Health.

In 2009 it is estimated that more than 1,700 men will die from prostate cancer in New York State, and more than 13,000 new cases will be diagnosed.

“The fact remains that over the course of their lives, one man in six will be diagnosed with prostate cancer,” Sue Smith said.

Scientists don’t know exactly what causes prostate cancer. However, certain factors have been shown to increase a man’s chances of developing it. These include:

- **Age:** as men get older, their chance of getting prostate cancer increases. The majority of cases are diagnosed in men 65 years and older; and 90 percent of prostate cancer deaths are in men over age 65.
- **Ethnicity:** prostate cancer is much more common in African-American men than in white men. In New York State, African-American men are 50 percent more likely to develop prostate cancer, and nearly twice as likely to die from it.
- **Family history:** if a man’s father, brother or son has had prostate cancer, his risk of the disease is doubled or even tripled.
- **Diet:** some studies suggest that men who eat large amounts of animal fats may face increased risk of prostate cancer.

“The good news is that most prostate cancers grow very slowly. There are more than two million men alive today who have had prostate cancer,” Sue Smith said.

Some medical experts recommend prostate cancer screening for all men over the age of 50, and for younger men who are at increased risk for prostate cancer. However, at this time there is not enough scientific evidence to say definitively that the benefits of prostate cancer screening outweigh the risks associated with screening. Medical experts agree that men should know the risks and benefits before they are screened.

For more information about prostate cancer, call the Otsego County Department of Health at (607) 547-4230 or visit the New York State Department of Health web site at <http://www.nyhealth.gov/diseases/cancer/prostate>.

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