Identification of cancer priorities in Essex County: Results from a cancer capacity & needs assessment (C/NA) performed as part of a statewide initiative of the New Jersey Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan

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A C/NA was conducted in Essex County from 4/03-6/04 to identify major cancer issues and available resources for cancer prevention, screening & treatment, and to develop recommendations to alleviate the county’s cancer burden. County-level epidemiologic data and key demographic indicators from Census 2000, such as poverty, unemployment, and limited English proficiency, were examined to understand potential barriers to healthcare access. The C/NA document is intended to provide a baseline on which local cancer control efforts can be implemented under the guidance of the Essex County Cancer Coalition. These are the major initiatives of New Jersey Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan (NJ-CCC) in the fight to control cancer in Essex County.

METHODS
Development of the Essex County C/NA Report included collection and analysis of data, by a trained NJ-CCC County Evaluator, on (1) County Demographics, (2) Existing Cancer Control Resources & Gaps (description of groups/institutions involved in cancer services/education and treatment analysis of any disparities in cancer service needs), (3) Cancer Burden (collection of cancer epidemiologic data and then analysis of disparities in cancer incidence, stage at diagnosis, and mortality within the county and of differences from the state’s cancer epidemiology profile) (4) Development and prioritization of (4) Evidence-based Recommendations to reduce the burden of cancer within the county.

Refer to Poster #P161 by Rosenblum et al for detailed methodology.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ESSEX C/NA
ESSEX COUNTY CANCER COALITION

The Essex County Cancer Coalition was formed as a partnership of diverse stakeholders to:
• Increase cancer awareness & reduce the impact of cancer on all Essex residents through improved screening, access to treatment & follow-up
• Increase collaboration & communication among all stakeholders to maximize utilization/identification of resources
• Promote the goals of the NJ-CCC and examine & prioritize an expansion of cancer control efforts throughout the county

CANCER BURDEN IN ESSEX
Estimated Number of Adult Essex County Residents Living with Cancer

Racial Disparities

In Essex County, the C/NA is the empirical basis for prioritizing cancer control efforts. The Coalition plans to emphasize cervical, oral & prostate cancers. Populations disproportionately affected by cancer will be a priority.

KEY FINDINGS IN C/NA

• Oral and prostate cancers emerged as new priorities in Essex from the C/NA. Historically, these cancers have not been widely recognized as priorities in Essex.
• Cervical cancer screening & treatment will remain a priority, since it is preventable and highly treatable. High cervical cancer mortality rates in Essex (compared to NJ) indicate a need for increased education and detection.
• Black males & females in Essex bear a higher burden of these cancers.