

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **RECORD-BREAKING NUMBERS ATTEND FREE SKIN CANCER SCREENINGS AT 11 NEW JERSEY SHORE BEACHES**

TOMS RIVER, NJ, July 26, 2009 — Over 1,400 people were screened through ‘Choose Your Cover’ a free melanoma skin cancer screening and educational program. This began as a demonstration project at a single beach site on Long Beach Island last summer, which led to over 500 screenings at two other locations. This summer every shore county in NJ held a screening venue. Beachgoers statewide not only learned about this important health concern and how to have fun outdoors while protecting their skin, but they also had an excellent and convenient opportunity to take part in a free skin cancer screening conducted by a physician or advanced-practice nurse.

Hundreds of beach devotees were screened and thousands of others were exposed to the Mike Geltrude Foundation and American Cancer Society brochures that highlight the hazards of UV radiation. The free skin cancer screenings were offered at eleven coastal beaches on July 25 when four County Cancer Coalitions teamed up to take the message of skin cancer prevention and early detection directly to visitors of the Jersey shore. Volunteers in Monmouth, Ocean, Atlantic and Cape May Counties combined their expertise to fight skin cancer where risks are perhaps the greatest – at the beach.

“Melanoma is a preventable cancer,” said Arnold Baskies, MD, FACS, who serves as chairman of the New Jersey Governor’s Task Force on Cancer Prevention and Early Detection and Treatment, Chairman of the New Jersey Melanoma Work Group, and President-elect of the American Cancer Society, Eastern Division. “New Jersey has a significantly higher risk of skin cancer than other states. Our efforts raised public awareness and promoted protection from the harmful effects of the sun.”

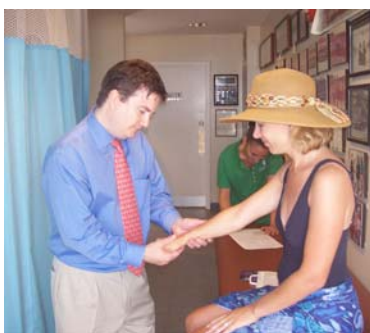
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“This is the type of program that can easily save lives and all it takes is a few minutes of your time. We want people to enjoy the time they spend out doors but we want them to do it wisely,” said Ocean County Freeholder Gerry P. Little, who serves as liaison to the Ocean County Health Department. “It is so important to educate and raise awareness on the subject. We want our visitors and residents to enjoy our beaches and their time outside but we all need to act responsibly when we spend time out in the sun.”

The purpose of “Choose Your Cover 2009” is to educate the public about sun safety, prevention and early detection of skin cancer, said Debra Levinson, Coordinator of the Ocean County Cancer Coalition. The coalition is one of 21 county-wide coalitions created to help implement the New Jersey comprehensive cancer control plan.

“Thanks to the input of dozens of volunteers up and down our seashore, led by Deb Levinson from Ocean County, over 1,400 people had a free screening for skin cancer.,” Dr. Baskies said. “The cooperation of the Freeholders, the local hospitals, doctors and nurses, the mayors, the volunteers and foundations, and the media, made this one of the most important cancer screenings in the history of our state. Congratulations to all, and get ready for next year!”

For more information about volunteer opportunities or how you can participate in next year’s Choose Your Cover (tentatively scheduled for July 17, 2010) contact Deb Levinson at 732-286-3693. You may also visit [www.njcancer.gov](http://www.njcancer.gov) and click on the calendar of events to find a free skin cancer screening in your area.



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