

# Union County Cancer Capacity and Needs Assessment Report Summary

## Fact Sheet

*The Office of Cancer Control and Prevention of the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, in conjunction with a mandate from the Governor's Task Force on Cancer Prevention, Early Detection and Treatment in New Jersey and in collaboration with the Department of Preventive Medicine and Community Health of the UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School, has developed comprehensive cancer capacity and needs assessment reports for each county in the state. These reports are a result of initial implementation steps of the New Jersey Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan (NJ-CCCP). The purpose of the reports is to identify the major cancer issues affecting each county and the county's available resources for cancer prevention, screening, and treatment, as well as to offer recommendations for improvement. Each report was written by county evaluators from a county-level point of view.*

### County Demographic Profile

- **2000 Population: 522,541**
- **Median Age: 36.6**
- **Racial Composition:**
  - **66% White**
  - **21% Black**
  - **4% Asian**
- **Ethnic Composition:**
  - **20% Hispanic**
- **Median Household Income: \$55,339**
- **% of residents  $\geq 25$  without high school diploma: 21%**
- **% of families living below the poverty level: 6.3%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau; Census 2000

### Overall Cancer Burden

From 1996-2000, an average of 649.4 men and 455.9 women per 100,000 were diagnosed with cancer each year in Union County, compared to the New Jersey rate of 628.7 for men and 453.7 for women. The average annual death rate was 254.7 for men, and 178.8 for women in Union County, compared to the state rate of 261.1 for men and 181.6 for women. As in the state, the types of cancers which affect the most people in Union County are prostate, breast, lung, and colorectal.

Note: Rates are per 100,000 and age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. Census population standards.

### Overarching Issues

- **Access:** Lack of access to cancer screening and oncology services for the county's medically underserved population is the principal cancer problem facing Union County. More than 1 out of 4 county residents are medically underserved, and many adults in this population do not seek care, especially preventive care including cancer screening, mainly because they cannot afford it.
- **Resources:** Union County's five hospitals, along with many private physicians and several mammography facilities, offer access to site-specific cancer screening, diagnostic, and treatment resources throughout the county. But cancer services appear to be fragmented and the county lacks a comprehensive plan to address cancer.
- **School Health Education:** Although it is standard practice in New Jersey for each school district to have a school health coordinator or curriculum development position, it is not known whether this is the case in all Union County school districts.
- **Advocacy:** There is no systemic advocacy effort being conducted on behalf of the cancer needs in Union County.
- **Nutrition and Physical Activity:** The provision of widespread cancer specific nutrition programs generally does not appear to exist throughout Union County. Programs and policies do exist that can be used to advance good nutrition and to adapt them for cancer patient and survivor use.
- **Childhood Cancer:** Overlook Hospital's Valerie Fund Center provides a full range of services for children with cancer or blood disorders and their families.

# Union County & New Jersey

## 1996-2000 Average Annual Age-Adjusted Incidence & Mortality Rates by Site

All Cancers	Incidence Rate <sup>1</sup>		Mortality Rate <sup>2</sup>	
	Union County	NJ	Union County	NJ
Male	649.4	628.7	254.7	261.1
Female	455.9	453.7	178.8	181.6
<b>NJ-CCCP Priority Cancer by Gender</b>				
Breast, female	142.5	138.5	33.1	31.3
Cervical, female	10.2	10.9	3.0	3.1
Colorectal, male	75.8	79.0	28.4	29.5
Colorectal, female	53.4	54.4	19.7	20.1
Lung, male	89.0	92.5	67.1	74.8
Lung, female	48.6	55.4	36.6	41.6
Melanoma, male	20.4	20.1	3.8	4.4
Melanoma, female	12.6	11.9	1.5	1.9
Oral/Oropharyngeal, male	14.3	15.7	<b>4.7</b>	4.2
Oral/Oropharyngeal, female	6.1	6.4	<b>1.8</b>	1.6
Prostate, male	<b>215.7</b>	194.3	<b>37.8</b>	32.9

Sources: <sup>1</sup> New Jersey State Cancer Registry, New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, August 2003

<sup>2</sup> National Cancer Institute and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, State Cancer Profiles (Accessed at <http://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/>)

Note: Rates are per 100,000 and age-adjusted to the 2000 U.S. Census population standards.  
A rate at least 10% higher than the corresponding state rate is shown in **bold italics**.

### County Recommendations

- Develop a Union County Cancer Control Plan based on the findings of the Union County Cancer Capacity and Needs Assessment and other pertinent information.
- Design and implement a large-scale, culturally sensitive outreach program to educate and motivate the county's medically underserved population, as well as all other residents and populations of focus, to adopt healthier life styles and, when appropriate, to obtain cancer screening services.
- Recruit members who are willing and able to address the cancer problems in Union County creatively and effectively for a first-rate, countywide, culturally sensitive, and proactive Cancer Coalition that will act as the county's cancer prevention task force.
- Marshal the resources needed to execute a new, large scale, Union County, Cancer Prevention Program, including the resources that necessary to follow-up and treat the increased volume of cancerous conditions that that will be discovered by this new program.
- Organize existing ambulatory clinics and private physicians into a coordinated cancer prevention network that will execute this new, Union County, Cancer Prevention Program.

### For More Information

New Jersey Department of Health & Senior Services  
Office of Cancer Control and Prevention  
P.O. Box 369  
Trenton, NJ 08625-0369  
(609) 588-5038

To access the full Report Summary, visit the website:  
[www.njcancer.gov](http://www.njcancer.gov)

