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Lung Cancer Awareness Month

In recognition of Lung Cancer Awareness Month, Genesee and Orleans County Health Departments (GO Health) are dedicated to increasing awareness about lung cancer and promoting early detection to save lives. As the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States, lung cancer affects thousands of families each year. The April 2023 New York State Health Equity Report found that Genesee County had a lung cancer rate of 71.5 cases per 100,000 people, while the rate in Orleans County was at 98 cases per 100,000 people.

Lung Cancer Awareness Month serves as a crucial opportunity to spotlight the importance of early detection and prevention. Lung cancer often develops without noticeable symptoms, making regular screenings vital for those at risk. We encourage individuals, particularly those with a history of smoking or exposure to environmental toxins, like radon, to consult with their healthcare providers about screening options.

Key Facts about Lung Cancer:

- Lung cancer is responsible for approximately 22% of all cancer deaths.
- Early detection can significantly improve survival rates, with a 5-year survival rate of 56% for those whose cancer is diagnosed at an early stage.
- Risk factors include smoking, exposure to secondhand smoke, radon gas, and other environmental pollutants.

Radon and Lung Cancer:

- Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States, after tobacco smoke. It is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers.
- Approximately 20,000 lung cancer deaths per year in the US are related to radon.

“Lung Cancer Awareness Month is not just about raising awareness; it’s about taking actionable steps to reduce risk factors associated with lung cancer,” said Paul Pettit, Public Health Director for GO Health. “Avoiding tobacco use and exposure to secondhand smoke is a key step to lower your risk of lung cancer. Additionally, testing your home for radon and mitigating high radon levels are important actions everyone can take to further reduce their chances of developing lung cancer.”

The Genesee County Health Department's Radon Program provides short-term radon test kits to residents of Genesee County. The program also offers educational materials and in-services programs on the danger of radon prevalence, and mitigation options for new or existing homes, all available at no charge. In other counties, short-term test kits can be purchased at your local hardware store or through the New York State Department of Health website <https://www.health.ny.gov/forms/doh-2247.pdf>

For more information about radon, contact the Genesee County Health Department at 585-344-2580 x5555 or Health@geneseeny.gov.

Resources:

American Cancer Society <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/lung-cancer/about/key-statistics>

United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
<https://www.epa.gov/radon/health-risk-radon>

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