

US cancer death rates in decline, national report finds

March 31 2011

A report from the nation's leading cancer organizations shows rates of death in the United States from all cancers for men and women continued to decline between 2003 and 2007. The findings come from the latest Annual Report to the Nation on the Status of Cancer.

The report also finds that the overall rate of new cancer diagnoses for men and women combined decreased an average of slightly less than 1 percent per year for the same period. Edward J. Benz, Jr., MD, president of Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston, called the news encouraging, but cautions we still have a very long way to go in our fight against cancer.

"Overall, the rate of cancer deaths is falling, but not by a lot, not nearly enough," said Benz. "But considering that the incidence of cancer continues to increase, while the number of deaths is flat or falling a little bit, it does suggest that efforts of prevention, early detection, and better treatments are having a positive impact."

The report is co-authored by researchers from the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries, the National Cancer Institute, the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), and the American Cancer Society. It will be posted on the web site of the [Journal of the National Cancer Institute](#) on March 31, and will be published in the journal's May 14 print issue.

The authors emphasized the need to focus further on reducing the cancer

burden in the population as a whole through prevention, detection and treatment of cancer.

"One of the best ways to avoid dying of [cancer](#) is to prevent it in the first place," added Dr. Benz. "This involves making lifestyle adjustments, such as not smoking, being careful about exposure to the sun, diet and exercise, and being careful about exposure to chemicals in the workplace. Patients also need to be sure to participate with their primary care physician in the kinds of screening that can pick up cancers very early."

Provided by Dana-Farber Cancer Institute

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