



## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

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## **Free prostate cancer screenings available in West Alabama**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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One in every six men will get prostate cancer some time in his life. The death rate from prostate cancer for African American men in Alabama is higher than in any other state. Late stage identification is a factor in many of these deaths. In Alabama 501 men died from prostate cancer in 2006, a rate of 10.9 deaths per 100,000 men.

Prostate cancer is the most common cancer in men, with the exception of skin cancer, and is the second leading cause of cancer death after lung cancer. Nationally, an estimated 230,000 men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer and 30,000 will die from the disease this year. African American men are much more likely than white men to get prostate cancer and are more than twice as likely to die of the disease.

"More men need to take advantage of the screening methods that can find this cancer early, when treatment outcomes are more favorable," said State Health Officer Dr. Donald Williamson. "Men should talk to their doctors about screening beginning at age 50, age 40 for African Americans, or if there is a strong family history of the disease."

Dr. Thomas Moody, president of Urology Centers of Alabama, said, "There are no noticeable symptoms of prostate cancer while it is still in its early stages so screening is very important. We are working with interested community leaders and will hold free screening events in several county health departments in the Black Belt this fall."

The cause of prostate cancer is not known, but a family history places a man at higher risk. Other possible risk factors include a high fat diet and obesity. The higher death rates among African Americans may be related to their higher numbers of cases and the fact that their cancers are more likely to be diagnosed late.

Screening involves a physical examination and a simple blood test called a PSA that measures the level of protein called prostate-specific antigen in the blood. Elevated readings can be a sign of prostate cancer. These tests take approximately 10 minutes to perform. Advances in medical technology help men diagnosed with prostate cancer to go on living an active and productive life after treatment.

The free screenings, sponsored by Urology Centers of Alabama and the Alabama Department of Public Health, will be held at county health departments on these Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. No appointments are necessary.

**Sept. 20**—Perry County Health Department, Highway 45 South, Marion

**Oct. 11**—Wilcox County Health Department, 107 Union St., Camden

**Oct. 25**—Hale County Health Department, 670 Hall St., Greensboro

**Nov. 1**—Marengo County Health Department, 303 Industrial Drive, Linden

Cancer information is available at [www.prostatecancerrobotic.com](http://www.prostatecancerrobotic.com)

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