



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Take 10 minutes for a healthier life; free prostate cancer screening offered on Aug. 20 at Monroe County Health Department

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Like most men, Ricky Elliott once found it easy to postpone health screenings.

“As a 45-year-old man I had often heard of the importance of yearly prostate screenings,” he said. “In April of 2010, after suffering a heart attack, I changed my view on health screenings. I realized the importance of identifying health issues early.”

Elliott is the administrator of the eight-county Public Health Area 9 of the Alabama Department of Public Health.

“I decided to have my first prostate cancer screening last year at the Monroe County Health Department at a free prostate screening conducted by Urology Centers of Alabama in Birmingham,” he said. “To my surprise the process was very quick and painless. From the time I entered the building until I left, it took only about 10 minutes.”

Urology Centers of Alabama sent him a letter containing his test results a few days later, so he now has a baseline PSA that can be monitored.

The Monroe County Health Department, in partnership with Dr. Thomas Moody and Urology Centers of Alabama, will offer free prostate screenings on Saturday, Aug. 20, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. at the Monroe County Health Department, 416 Agriculture Drive, Monroeville, Ala.

Statistics show that detecting prostate cancer early, through physical exams and blood tests, can mean a 95 percent survival rate if the disease remains confined to the organ.

Prostate cancer is a disease that will affect one out of every six men (one in four African American men) at some point in their lives, and more than 33,720 will die from prostate cancer this year.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths among men in the United States. Alabama has the third highest rate of prostate cancer in the country. In Alabama, 710 men will die of prostate cancer in 2011.

According to Dr. Moody, regular screenings for prostate cancer are crucial because the disease typically produces no symptoms until the cancer is in its more advanced stages.

Dr. Moody states, "The percentage of men getting screened in Alabama has been low. Our death rate from prostate cancer is the third highest in the nation, and we believe it is related to the number of men who are not getting screened."

The prostate screening clinics are provided free of charge to all men regardless of insurance. For those men whose screenings reveal potential problems, follow-up procedures will be recommended. If a man is unable to afford follow-up procedures, Dr. Moody and the association will provide care.

Elliott said, "Having a yearly prostate screening is another way that I can take control of my health and do whatever I can to live a healthier life. I strongly encourage any man over the age of 40 to take 10 minutes of his time and have this screening performed."

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