BY DEBRA DENITTO, BS

Developing Skin Cancer Prevention Initiatives for the Whole Family

Key to the success of any outreach program is the ability to leverage community resources. Reducing the substantial investment incurred by one entity and sharing the cost of resources—whether in the form of funding dollars or staffing—is a practical and beneficial approach for all involved. In 2016, Valley Health, a not-for-profit healthcare system serving patients in Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia, partnered with a local dermatology office and various community and state stakeholders on a common goal to educate our community about smart sun protection decisions and the importance of skin cancer screenings. This multicomponent community-wide intervention took place in a defined geographic area: the Lord Fairfax Health District, where Winchester Medical Center, the flagship hospital for Valley Health, is located. Not only is this approach recommended by the Community Preventive Services Task Force, but Valley Health's work as a member of the Cancer Action Coalition of Virginia further supported this goal as the 2013–2017 Virginia Cancer Plan identified these strategies and goals:

- Advocate for community education regarding skin cancer prevention
- Promote sunscreen use
- Raise awareness of protective clothing
- Partner with other Cancer Action Coalition of Virginia team members to promote prevention strategies and encourage educational activities in health districts with the highest cancer incidence and mortality rates.

The Task Force notes that a few serious sunburns in childhood can increase skin cancer risk late in life, and some studies suggest that improving children's sun-protective behaviors (i.e., sunscreen use) can be effective interventions.

"The purpose of Cancer Action Coalition of Virginia is to facilitate statewide collaborations of organizations and individuals to focus on activities related to objectives contained in the state plan, which is updated every five years. Membership in the volunteer coalition includes representatives of both National Cancer Institute–designated Clinical Cancer Centers in Virginia, the American Cancer Society, the Virginia Department of Health, foundations, community groups, medical associations, national cancer coalitions, the General Assembly, hospitals, cancer survivors, universities, health insurance companies, and community medically-related groups.[1]"

Evidence-Based Guidelines

The Community Preventive Services Task Force notes, "Skin cancer is the most common form of cancer in the United States. People can lower their risk of getting skin cancer by getting less sun exposure and protecting themselves while in the sun."[2] The Task Force recommends interventions in outdoor recreational settings where people are exposed to the sun (e.g., community pools) or where sun exposure is incidental to the recreational activity (e.g., family picnics). Evidence-based interventions for communities include improving knowledge and attitudes about sun protection among children and adults and creating sun-safe environments.[2] The Task Force notes that a few serious sunburns in childhood can increase skin cancer risk late in life, and some studies suggest that improving children's sun-protective behaviors (i.e., sunscreen use) can be effective interventions. According to the Skin Cancer Foundation, melanoma is now the second most common form of cancer for adolescents 15 to 29 years old.[3]

> Our goal: to identify an approach to help address and work toward decreasing the number of patients with late-stage disease and provide new opportunities to educate residents on the importance of skin cancer prevention and early detection, while promoting sun-protective behaviors.

New research from the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine shows some infants are being exposed to the sun's damaging ultraviolet rays in the first six months of life. This research also found many parents actively increased their infants' sun exposure, believing it would build their babies tolerance to the sun's rays.

The American Academy of Pediatrics has released guidelines to prevent sunburn in babies under six months, including to avoid sun exposure among infants and to dress infants in lightweight long pants, long-sleeved shirts, and brimmed hats that shade the neck to prevent sunburn.

Improving sun-protective behaviors across generations is now a priority in this country.

Our Melanoma Stats At-a-Glance

Winchester Medical Center's community lies in the Lord Fairfax Health District, which was ranked as having the highest mortality rates of melanoma among 35 health districts in Virginia from 2008 to 2012 and ranked unfavorably regarding percentage of locally staged cases (2007–2011) by the Virginia Cancer Registry and the Virginia Department of Health Statistics. During 2009 to 2013, our health district was ranked again as having high mortality rates of melanoma and continued to rank unfavorably with regards to the percentage of locally staged cases. Additionally, our cancer registry, a primary data resource, is documenting an increase in melanoma diagnoses. In 2011 our cancer registry accessioned 16 cases of melanoma into our registry database; in 2014 the number of accessioned cases rose to 45.

In 2016 Valley Health's cancer committee and community outreach coordinator began to work on initiatives to tackle these unfavorable statistics. Our goal: to identify an approach to help address and work toward decreasing the number of patients with late-stage disease and provide new opportunities to educate our community on the importance of skin cancer prevention and early detection, while promoting sun-protective behaviors.

Hosting a SPOTme® Skin Cancer Screening Event

Beginning in 1985, the American Academy of Dermatology began offering an evidence-based public service health program entitled SPOTme Skin Cancer Screening. Program guidelines state: "When caught early, skin cancer, including melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer, is highly treatable. A skin cancer screening only takes a few minutes, yet it could save your life."[4] The program's mission: to reduce the incidence of and mortality from skin cancer. The SPOTme Skin Cancer Screening offers free skin cancer screening programs along with education on the importance of sun protection and early skin cancer detection. Screenings are performed by a dermatologist who is a member of the American Academy of Dermatology.

In May 2016, Skin Cancer Awareness Month, Valley Health's Oncology Community Outreach Coordinator collaborated with a local dermatology group, Dermatology Associates of Winchester, to host a free SPOTme Skin Cancer Screening Day with the following goals and processes set in place:

- The free screening accommodated 50 people and appointments were required.
- All participants had the opportunity for a full body exam or a spot and/or mole check.
- Anyone found to have a suspicious lesion had the opportunity to schedule a follow-up visit with Dermatology Associates or the medical provider of their choosing.
- Dermatology Associates agreed to treat any uninsured patient
- Valley Health handled all event advertising and provided private exam rooms for the screening at the hospital, including gowns and gloves.
- The rate of cancer diagnosis for this screening was reported back to the hospital's cancer committee for evaluation.

The American Academy of Dermatology's "Plan an Event Toolkit" has information on how to plan a SPOTme event, including:

- How to recruit dermatologists
- Screening guidelines
- Suggested timelines designed as a checklist
- FAQs

- Marketing and media resources, such as a sample news release, public service announcements, and social media posts
- Guidelines on how many patients should be scheduled per hour, identifying and securing exam rooms for privacy, offering a full-body exam when possible, and materials needed for the screening (exam gowns, latex gloves, etc.)
- Check-in and check-out processes.

Additionally, the American Academy of Dermatology provides HIPAA-compliant skin cancer screening registration and report forms, notice of privacy practices poster and handouts, save-the-date flyers, sun safety posters, and skin cancer educational handouts and information. The Academy allows organizations to advertise their community skin cancer screening event on its website and to share with participants a toll-free hotline. View the Academy's infographic, "9 Steps to Hosting Your Own Skin Cancer Screening," online at: accc-cancer.org/skin-cancer-screening.

On the day of our community skin cancer screening event, two board-certified dermatologists, one certified physician assistant, three registered nurses, and five staff members were on-site to see the 50 community members who had pre-registered and scheduled appointments. Screened individuals were provided a copy of a SPOTme screening registration and report form, which detailed the results of their exam along with recommendations, if necessary, for a follow-up examination. Individuals who lacked health insurance received a Valley Health financial assistance application to help if follow-up was recommended. This team educated participants on the importance of conducting a skin cancer self-examination, including an American Academy of Dermatology body mole map to help people record their self-exam. Free sunscreen samples were distributed to all participants and family members.

After the event, team members contacted screened participants who were recommended for additional follow-up. Of the 50 community members who were screened, 25 (50 percent) were referred for additional follow-up due to suspicious moles or spots. Ten refused or canceled their follow-up appointment despite multiple contact attempts. Of the remaining 15 participants, six were diagnosed with actinic keratosis and nine required biopsies. The nine biopsies revealed two basal cell, two squamous cell, and two melanoma in situ diagnoses, for which treatment was administered according to American Academy of Dermatology Guidelines (see Table 1, above).

Our cancer committee made the decision to offer this free skin cancer screening event based on needs identified by the Virginia Cancer Registry, the Virginia Department of Health Division of Health Statistics, and our own cancer registry. Winchester Medical Center is accredited by the American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer, so this screening event satisfied the Commission on Cancer's Standard 4.2: Screening Programs. Our cancer committee recommended repeating this community screening again in 2017, and Dermatology Associates agreed to work with us and support another SPOTme community skin cancer screening event.

Table 1. Outcomes from 2016 Skin Cancer Screening Event

Activity	Number of Participants
Screened	50
Referred for follow-up	25
Compliant with follow-up	15
Biopsies	9
Cancer diagnosis	6
Basal cell	2
Squamous cell	2
Melanoma in situ	2
Actinic keratosis	6

Providing an SPF 30 Sunscreen Dispenser at a Local Community Pool

Among others, the American Academy of Dermatology identifies these two risk factors for developing skin cancer:

1. "Even one blistering sunburn during childhood or adolescence can nearly double a person's chance of developing melanoma."[5]
2. "Experiencing five or more blistering sunburns between ages 15 and 20 increases one's melanoma's risk by 80 percent and non-melanoma skin cancer risk by 68 percent."[6]

Based on strong evidence, the Community Preventive Services Task Force recommended that encouragement of sun protection improves sun protection behaviors, which in turn helps reduce the incidence of sunburns. The Task Force recommended an environmental approach (i.e., free sunscreen) to make it easier for community members to engage in protective behavior and hopefully elicit behavior change.

Partnering with another Cancer Action Coalition of Virginia team member, Valley Health implemented two sun safety interventions in the summer of 2016. The first sun safety intervention was to provide a wall-mounted sunscreen dispenser (SPF 30) at a local community pool for those who forgot their sunscreen, used up their own supply of sunscreen, and/or or had not purchased any. Our goal: to encourage and create a sun-safe environment at the pool by improving attitudes about sun protection. Because the wall-mounted sunscreen dispenser was so well received by its visitors, the community pool continued this service the following summer in 2017.

SPF sunscreen dispenser at local community pool being utilized by a lifeguard and swimmer. Photo Credit: Nick Matheson.

Offering Protective Clothing and Sun Safety Education at a Newborn Care Class

The second sun safety intervention was to distribute protective clothing (infant hats) at Valley Health's Women and Children's Services Newborn Care Class. The class meets once per month and is attended by the mothers, fathers, and grandparents of newborns. Because many of these parents have other children at home, this intervention provided an opportunity to reinforce the dangers of sun exposure for all children. Attendees received up-to-date evidence-based information from the American Academy of Pediatrics, affording us the perfect opportunity to raise awareness of the dangers the sun has on all members of the family. The Melanoma Research Foundation suggests, "Fighting melanoma must start with prevention efforts, public awareness efforts, behavior modification, and attitude changes toward sun safety and overall sun exposure. It's never too early, or too late, to protect your skin or your child's skin from harmful UV rays."[7]

Closing Recommendations

Table 2, right, offers a brief overview of the strategies used by Valley Health in summer 2016 to promote skin cancer screenings and education about sun safety behaviors. From this experience, we believe that aligning with partners who are engaged and with whom you are well matched results in meaningful collaborations, improving community health in cancer prevention. To provide a clear snapshot of your community gaps and where to focus preventive or cancer screening efforts, look to public health resources and your own organization's primary data. Partnering with your state cancer coalition and forming relationships within that group of varied members opens a door to learning what others are doing in the field of cancer prevention and where conclusive experiences and outcomes can be shared. Everyone in this group has the same mission, and by working in partnership, all stakeholders gain valuable resources, insights, and experiences. Always seek to apply evidence-based interventions, whether through the Community Preventive Task Force or a professional medical association. Sharing resources across all levels can bring substantial value to communities no matter where you reside. The power is in the collaboration. OI

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Table 2. Strategies Used by Valley Health in the Summer of 2016

Community Partner	Approach	Evidence-Based Guideline
Local dermatology office	SPOTme® skin cancer community screening	American Academy of Dermatology
Community pool	Wall-mounted SPF 30 sunscreen dispenser	Community Preventive Services Task Force
Newborn care class	Protective clothing (infant sun hats)	American Academy of Pediatrics

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