

# Cervical Cancer Quality Study

## Tift Regional Medical Center

**2012**

The American Cancer Society's most recent estimates for cancer of the cervix in the United States are for 2012:

- About 12,170 new cases of invasive cervical cancer
- About 4,220 deaths from cervical cancer

Cervical cancer was once one of the most common causes of cancer death for American women. Since 1955 the number of deaths from cervical cancer has gone down. The main reason for this change is the use of screenings to find cervical cancer early. When found and treated early, cervical cancer can often be cured. Cervical cancer can sometimes even be prevented entirely by having regular PaP tests. Finding abnormal cell changes early with a Pap test can be lifesaving.

### **Symptoms**

Early cervical cancers usually don't cause symptoms. When the cancer grows larger, women may notice abnormal vaginal bleeding:

- Bleeding that occurs between regular menstrual periods
- Bleeding after sexual intercourse, douching, or a pelvic exam
- Menstrual periods that last longer and are heavier than before
- Bleeding after going through menopause

Women may also notice:

- Increased vaginal discharge
- Pelvic pain
- Pain during sex

Cervical cancer, infections, or other health problems may cause these symptoms. A woman with any of these symptoms should tell her doctor so that problems can be diagnosed and treated as early as possible.

## **Risk factors**

- Early sexual activities
- Multiple sexual partners
- HPV that doesn't go away
- HIV infection
- Smoking

## **HPV**

HPV is short for human papilloma virus. This virus can cause change in the cervix. HPV can lead to cervical cancer. Almost all women who have sex will have HPV at some time, but very few will get cervical cancer. HPV is spread through sex and it can cause an infection in the cervix. The infection doesn't last very long because your body is able to fight the infection. If the HPV doesn't go away, the virus may cause cervical cells to change and become precancer cells. Precancer cells are not cancer. Most cells with early precancer changes return to normal on their own. Sometimes, the precancer cells may turn into cancer if they are not found and treated.

## **HPV Vaccines**

HPV vaccines are given as three shots to protect against HPV infection and HPV-related diseases. Two vaccines, Cervarix and Gardasil, have been shown to protect against most cervical cancers in women. Gardasil also protects against genital warts and has been shown to protect against cancers of the anus, vagina, and vulva. Both vaccines are available for females. Only Gardasil is available for males.

HPV vaccines offer the greatest health benefits to individuals who receive all three doses before having any type of sexual activity. That's why HPV vaccination is recommended for preteen girls and boys at age 11 or 12 years.

HPV vaccines are recommended for all teen girls, and women through age 26, who did not get all three doses of the vaccine when they were younger.

HPV vaccine is recommended for all teen boys and men through age 21, who did not get all three doses of the vaccine when they were younger.

## Screening and Prevention

The American Cancer Society recommends the following:

- All women should begin cervical cancer testing (screening) at age 21. For women aged 21 to 29, testing should be with a Pap test every 3 years. HPV testing should not be used for screening in this age group (although it may be used as a part of follow-up for an abnormal Pap test).
- Beginning at age 30, the preferred way to screen is with a Pap test combined with an HPV test every 5 years. This should be continued until age 65.
- Another option for women 30 to 65 is to get tested every 3 years with just the Pap test.
- Women who are at high risk of cervical cancer (for instance, because of a weak immune system from HIV infection, organ transplant, or long term steroid use or because they were exposed to DES in utero) may need to be screened more often. They should follow the recommendations of their healthcare providers.
- Women over 65 years of age who have had regular screening in the past 10 years should stop cervical cancer screening as long as they haven't had any serious pre-cancers found in the last 20 years. Women who have had certain pre-cancers should keep on being tested for at least 20 years after the pre-cancer was found.
- Women who have had a hysterectomy (removal of the uterus and cervix) should stop screening (such as Pap tests and HPV tests) unless the surgery was done as a treatment for cervical cancer or pre-cancer. Women who have had a hysterectomy with the cervix left intact should continue to follow the guidelines above.
- Women of any age should NOT be screened every year by any screening method.
- Women who have been vaccinated against HPV should still follow these guidelines.
- Women who do not have Pap tests at all or who do not have them as often as they should have the greatest chance of late stage at diagnosis.

Some women believe that they can stop cervical cancer screening once they have stopped having children. This is not correct. They should continue to follow American Cancer Society guidelines.

Although screening every year should not be done, women who have abnormal screening results may need to have a follow-up Pap test done in 6 months or a year.

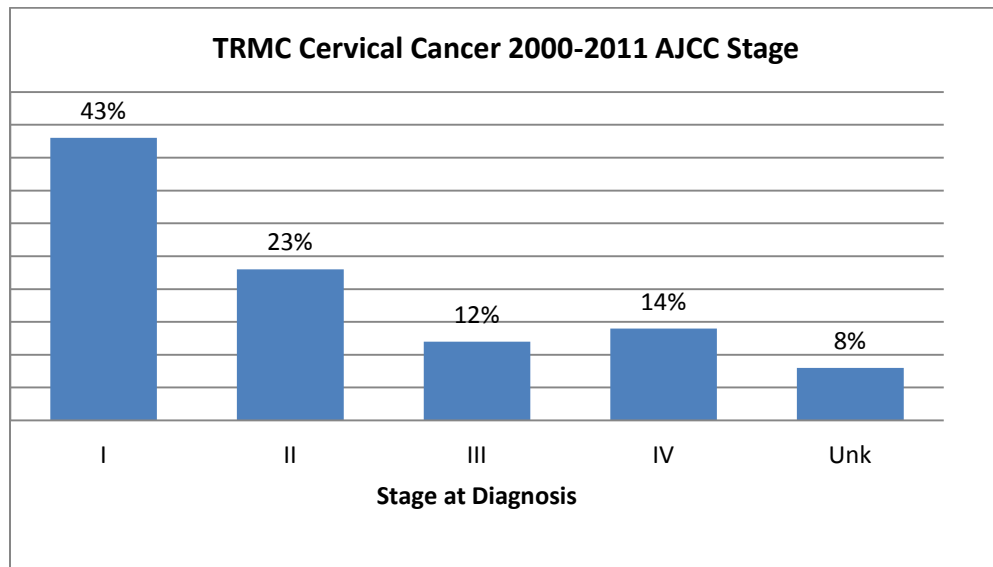
The American Cancer Society guidelines for finding cervical cancer early do not apply to women who have been diagnosed with cervical cancer. These women should have follow-up testing as recommended by their healthcare team.

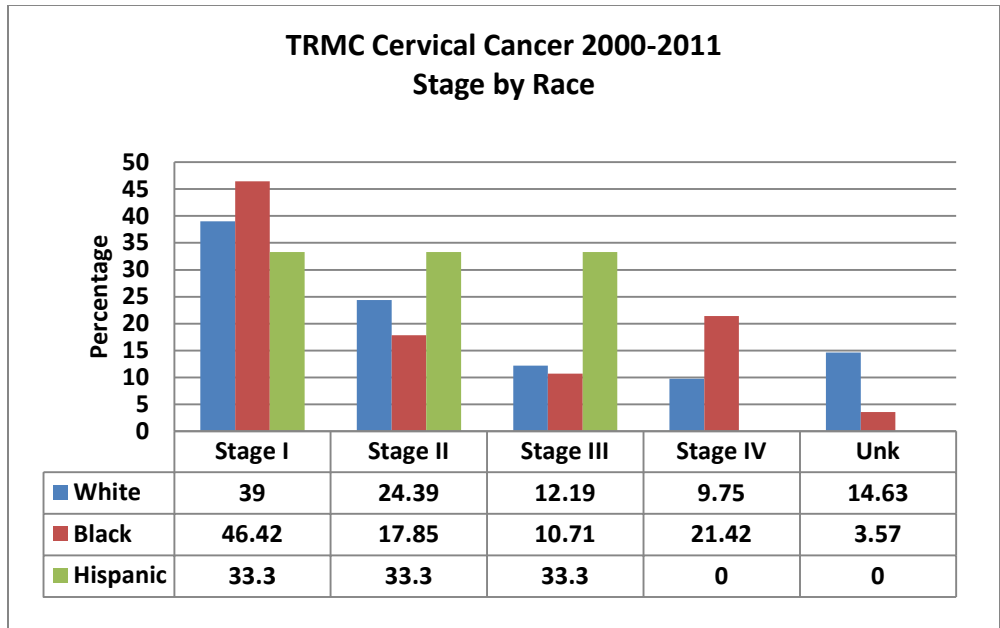
## TRMC Quality Study of Cervical Cancer

The cancer committee requested that the 2000-2011 analytical cervical cancer cases at Tift Regional be evaluated for quality of care. It was felt that this cancer site may need improved community education and earlier detection in our service area. The following are findings of that evaluation.

74 invasive cervical cancer cases have been entered in the TRMC cancer registry data base from 2000-2011. This accounts for only 1% of the total cancer cases seen at this facility. The following graph shows the stage at diagnosis of the 74 cases. The majority of the cases, 43%, were diagnosed at stage I, 23% at stage II, 12% at stage III, and 14% at stage IV. 8% were reported as unknown stage. 4 of the 6 unknown stage cases were diagnosed at Tift Regional but treated elsewhere.

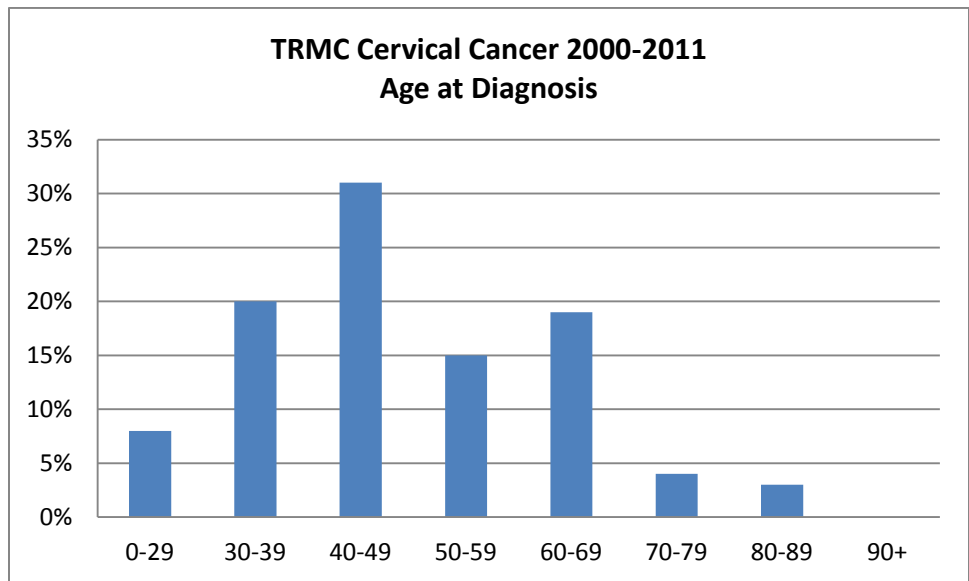
### Stage and Race





Tift Regional is diagnosing a higher percentage of black patients with cervical cancer in stage IV.

## Age



Cervical cancer tends to occur in midlife. Most cases are found in women younger than 50. It rarely occurs in women younger than 20. Even women over 50 are still at risk of getting cervical cancer. This is why it is important for older women to keep being screened for cervical cancer.

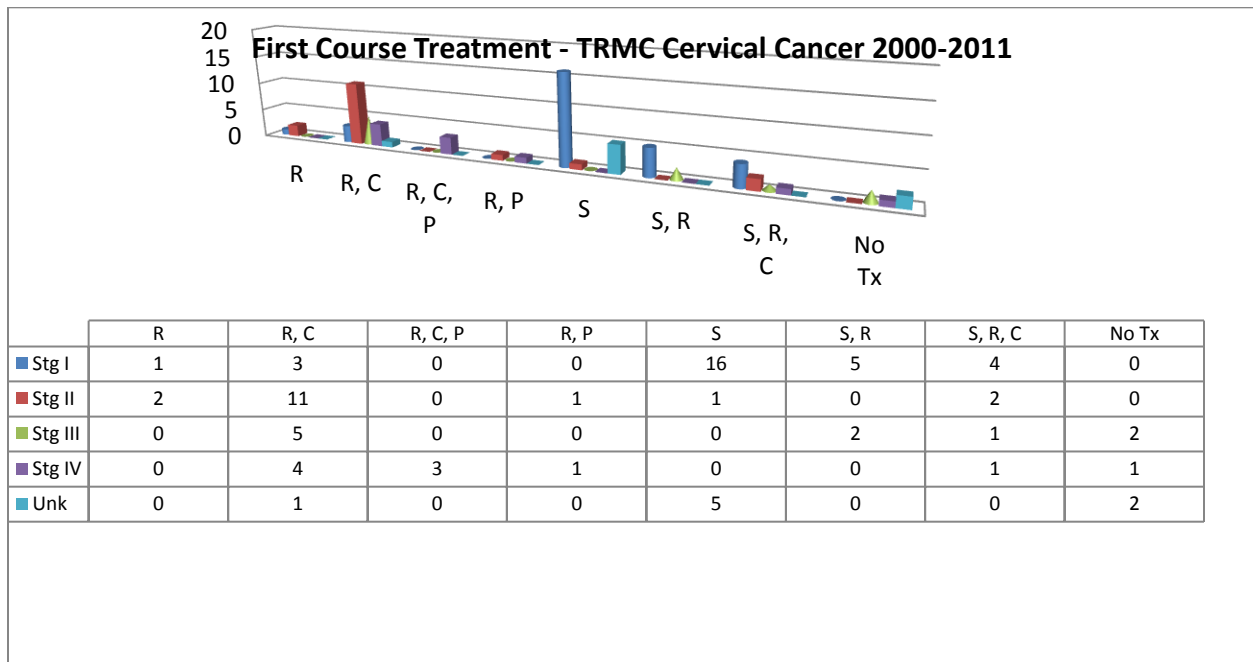
## Treatment

Treatment options for women with cervical cancer are

- Surgery
- Radiation therapy
- Chemotherapy
- A combination of these methods

The choice of treatment depends mainly on the size of the tumor and whether the cancer has spread. The treatment choice may also depend on whether the woman would like to become pregnant someday.

The physician may refer to a specialist, or the patient may ask for a referral to a gynecologic oncologist.



S – surgery, R – radiation, C – chemotherapy, P- palliative treatment

## Tift County at a Glance

	Tift	Georgia
Population	41,685	9,363,941
<18 years	26.7	26.0
25-44 years	27.4	30.2
45-64 years	11.7	9.7
White	70.3	65.8
Black	27.4	29.9
Average household income	32,616	62,744
In poverty	19.9	14.7
Cervical cancer deaths	* number too low to calculate	1.3
Teenage Pregnancy	41.8	34.5
Tobacco use (Cigarettes)	31.8	29.8

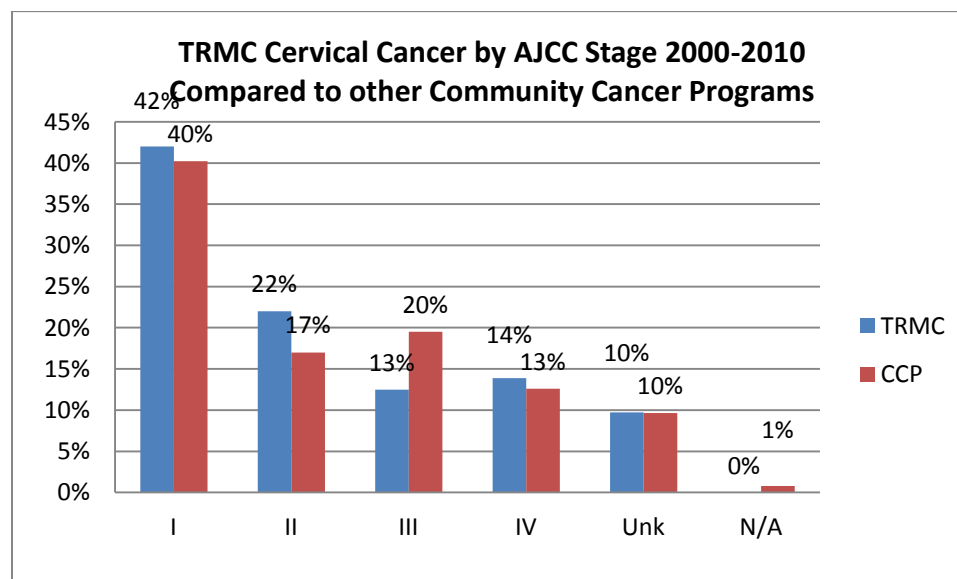
When compared to the rest of the State, Tift County

- Has a higher percentage of poverty
- Has a lower rate of death by cervical cancer
- Has a higher percentage of tobacco users

### National Comparison Analysis

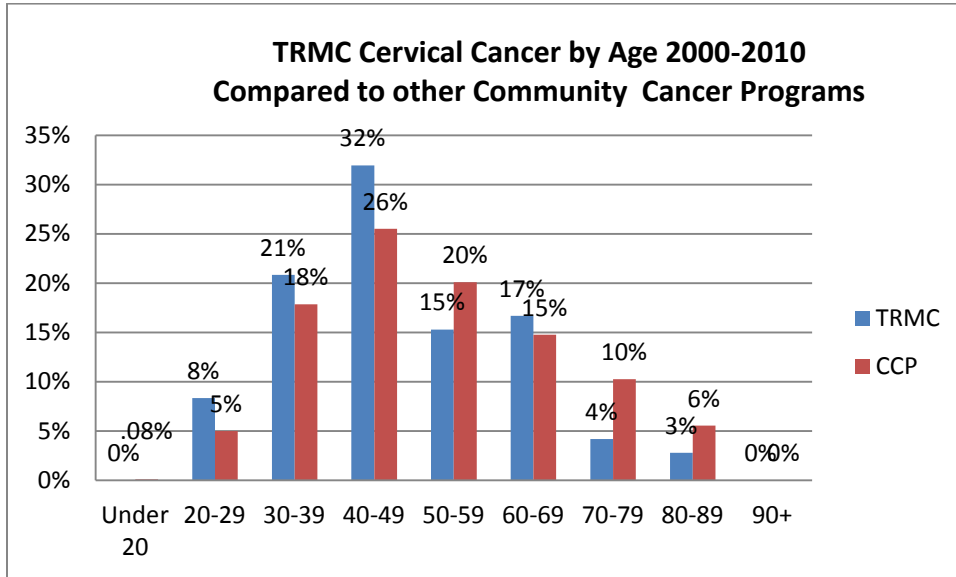
Commission on Cancer benchmark comparison with other Community Cancer Programs reveals TRMC is diagnosing a greater percentage of patients at stages I and II, less stage III and 1% greater at stage IV.

### Stage

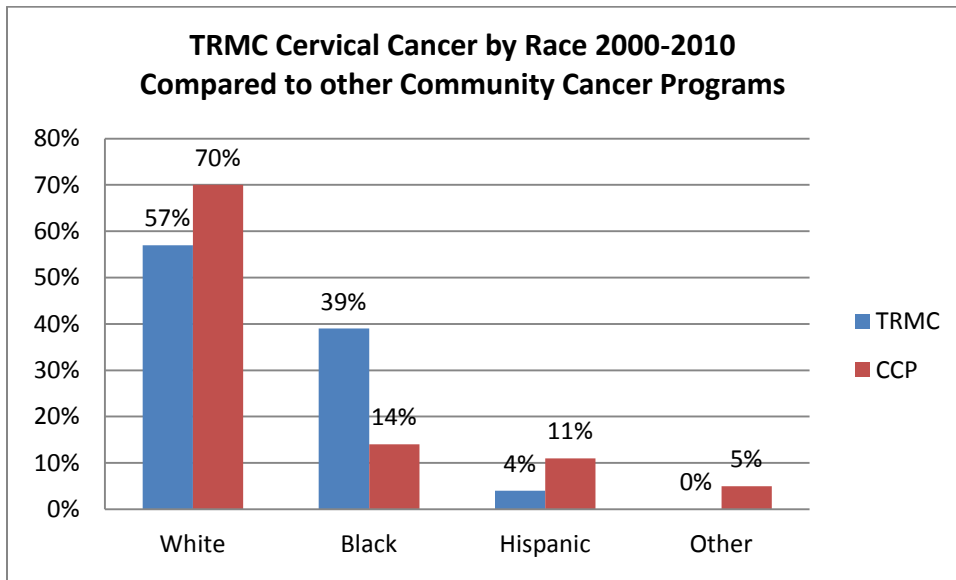


TRMC has a higher number of cases diagnosed prior to age 50 (61%) when compared to other Community Cancer Programs (49%).

### Age



### Race

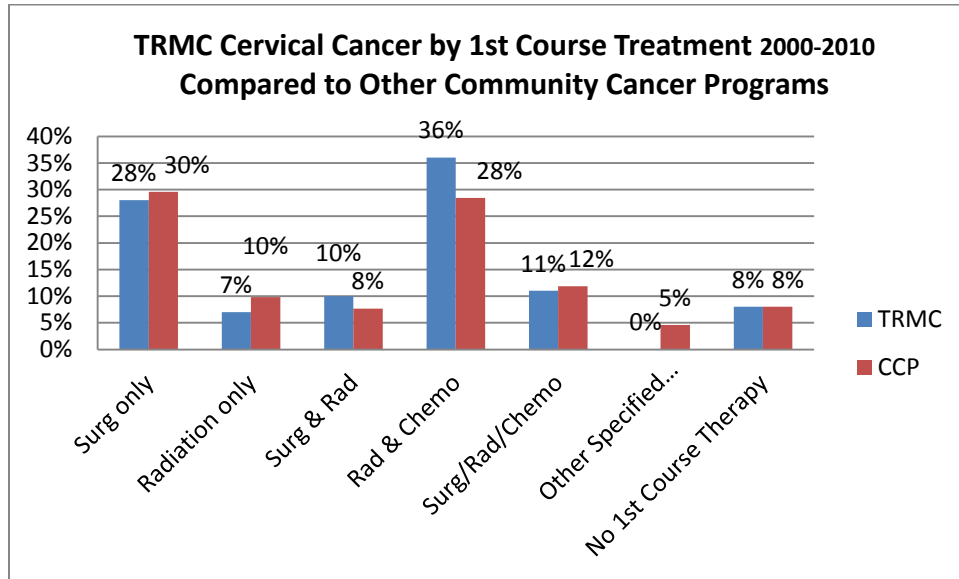


57% of the cervical cancer patients are white compared to 70% nationwide and 39% are black compared to 14% nationwide. Only 4% of our patients are Hispanic compared to 11% nationwide.



The 2010 US population Census shows 78.1% white and 13.1% black, for Georgia 55.9% white and 30% black and 8.8% Hispanic. For Tift County 58.7% are white and 28.8% black and 10% Hispanic. This would be comparable with the above information.

## Treatment



## Summary and Recommendations:

- 61% of the cervical cancer cases diagnosed at Tift Regional are under age 50, compared to 49% of other community cancer centers nationwide.
- Commission on Cancer benchmark comparison with other Community Cancer Programs reveal TRMC is diagnosing a greater percentage of patients at stage I and II, less stage III, but 1% greater at stage IV.
- A higher percentage of black patients are diagnosed at stage IV. This would indicate a need to increase efforts for education and screening for this patient population in Tift County and surrounding communities.
- When compared to the remainder of the State, Tift County has a higher percentage of poverty and a lower rate of death by cervical cancer.

## Screening/Services Available:

**Tift Regional Medical Center**, located in Tift County, provides services and physicians for the prevention and early detection of cervical cancer to decrease the number of patients with late-stage disease. As an approved Community Cancer Program through the American College of Surgeons, Tift Regional offers comprehensive care, including a complete range of services,

technology and a team approach to coordinate the best available treatment options and support services to patients who have been diagnosed with cervical cancer.

**(BCCP)** In the South Health District, which includes Tift County, the Breast and **Cervical Cancer Program** is a screening program for women age 40-64, who are uninsured and under-insured, to detect early cancer and pre-cancers of the breast and cervix. Trained nurses and nurse practitioners provide PAP smears as indicated. In the event of positive or questionable findings, women are referred to local providers. To help defray the cost of treatment, Women's Health Medicaid can be obtained if eligibility requirements are met. This program lowers the death rate from cervical cancer by early detection.

**The Tift County Health Department** is available to assist patients in making responsible decisions regarding their sexual health through the Family planning program. Education is provided to preteens, teens, and women up to age 43, concerning sexual health, birth control and general overall health. Testing for STD's and how to avoid them, physicals with pap smears, if indicated, and birth control options are a part of the program. Abstinence is encouraged for teens in the program as being the single best way to avoid unintended pregnancy, HIV and sexually transmitted diseases from occurring. If requested, age appropriate birth control is dispensed as well as an assessment for needed vaccines such as HPV and Hepatitis B. These vaccines are provided at a low cost of \$10.00 each and occasionally this fee can be waived. Inability to pay is never a barrier to receiving services. Some of the other services offered through the center are STD testing for anyone requesting it, with treatment and abstinence support group.

### **Action/Plan**

- Educate community concerning need for prevention and early detection of cervical cancer, especially in women under age 50
- Educate community concerning HPV
- Educate community concerning HPV Vaccine recommendations
- Educate community concerning assistance programs available to the uninsured or under-insured patients
- Decrease the number of patients with late stage disease

### **References:**

TRMC METRIQ Cancer Registry Database

American Cancer Society [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org)

National Cancer Database [www.facs.org](http://www.facs.org)

National Cancer Institute [www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)

Georgia Center for Cancer Statistics [www.sph.emory.edu](http://www.sph.emory.edu)

South Health District [www.southhealthdistrict.com](http://www.southhealthdistrict.com)

Centers for Disease control [www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/stdfact-hpv-vaccine-young-women.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/std/hpv/stdfact-hpv-vaccine-young-women.htm)

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