

# HEALTH NEWS

## Identifying A Common Risk Factor For Cancer

(NAPSA)—Americans might be surprised to learn what public health experts say is one of the most important keys in the fight against cancer: insurance.

Scientific research published in medical journals has shown that people who are uninsured are more likely to be diagnosed with more advanced cancer compared to those with private insurance. For example, the research found that survival rates are better for people who are insured and diagnosed with stage two colon cancer than for those who are uninsured and diagnosed with stage one.

Experts say the correlation has to do with access to quality care and screening for cancer, which can help doctors diagnose the disease at its earliest and most treatable stages.

“Great progress is being made in the fight against cancer,” said Elmer E. Huerta, M.D., M.P.H., national volunteer president of the American Cancer Society. “Reducing suffering and death from cancer may only truly be possible if all Americans are able to visit their doctor for regular checkups, early-detection screening tests and prompt, quality cancer treatment.” To help raise awareness of that issue, the American Cancer Society and its sister advocacy organization, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, launched a public awareness campaign that highlights the barriers that average Americans confront when facing cancer. Providing all Americans with access to high-quality health care will significantly reduce the rates of cancer



**Access to insurance and quality care were identified as two key factors in the fight against cancer.**

incidence and mortality, and will measurably improve quality of life for all people with cancer.

Additionally, as part of its National Cancer Information Center, the American Cancer Society features a Health Insurance Assistance Service that offers trained specialists who assist cancer patients or their loved ones from 32 states with questions about health insurance.

“People expect that their insurance will be sufficient should they be faced with a major illness,” Huerta said. “Unfortunately, millions of Americans think they are covered, but find out too late that their insurance is inadequate. No one should have to choose between taking care of their health and paying their bills.”

For more information, visit [www.cancer.org/access](http://www.cancer.org/access).