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## NEWS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

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## **WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW CAN KILL YOU** *Seven Things Young Men Should Do to Protect Against Cancer*

**DALLAS (April 11, 2011)**—Men in their 20s and 30s might feel invincible, but lack of knowledge and lifestyle choices in their young adult years could greatly increase their chances of developing cancer. The dangers of tobacco, overeating, heavy drinking, and a sedentary lifestyle are already well documented, but new research indicates that unsafe sex is responsible for many infections that could lead to cancer.

According to a recent study published in *The Lancet*, half of all American men ages 18 to 70 now have the human papillomavirus (HPV), which causes warts, some forms of head and neck cancer, penile cancer, and anal cancer. HPV is linked to 90 percent of anal cancers. Although HPV-related cancers are increasing, they are highly treatable if diagnosed early.

“Unhealthy behavior by men in their 20s and 30s can have devastating consequences as they age,” said Dr. Kevin Doner, medical oncologist at Texas Oncology. “Abstinence and safe sex not only protect against sexually transmitted diseases, but they also help prevent HPV-related cancers. In addition, HPV vaccines are a very effective way to prevent infection.”

Doctors say that the reluctance of many men to visit a doctor or undergo annual physical examinations also prevents their best chances for early cancer detection and effective treatment. More than 25 percent of men have not visited a doctor within the past year and a similar percentage does not have a regular place of healthcare, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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The following describes several cancers that can either occur in young adult men or are caused by harmful habits that typically begin in the late teens and early 20s.

### **Testicular Cancer**

Early treatment is the key to overcoming testicular cancer, which is the most common cancer found in men ages 15 to 34. Testicular cancer rates are now twice as high for white American men than 40 years ago and the rates for African American men are beginning to rise.

Although the disease is essentially unpreventable with risk factors present at birth, more than 95 percent of patients are cancer-free after completing treatment, especially if the testicular cancer is detected early enough before it spreads to other parts of the body. Self-examinations and consultations with physicians are the best ways to ensure early detection. More physicians are now focusing on fertility preservation as part of cancer treatment for young men.

### **Lung Cancer**

Lung cancer is responsible for the most cancer-related deaths in Texas and has one of the lowest survival rates. Only 16 percent of lung cancer patients live more than five years beyond their initial diagnosis. A recent major study found that CT scans may help identify lung cancer in smokers. However, until further research is completed to solidify the findings, lung cancer remains without a screening tool that allows cancers to be caught early.

According to the American Lung Association, tobacco smoke is the leading cause of lung cancer cases even though the effects of the disease might not show up for years. Despite decades of warnings about the dangers of tobacco, research surveys reveal that smoking prevalence is highest among people ages 25 to 44 years (23.7 percent) and more males than females smoke. For those 26 years and older, 28.3 percent had used some form of tobacco product in the last month. Over time, that trend can have a devastating effect.

Most new cigar users are teenagers and young adults ages 18 to 24 who smoke only occasionally, typically at parties or with friends. In addition to lung cancer, cigar smoking can cause cancer of the oral cavity, larynx, esophagus, and possibly the pancreas. Nationwide, about 7 percent of men ages 18 and older and 15 percent of high school boys use chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip. Doctors remind patients that tobacco, in any form, is highly addictive.

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### **Colon Cancer**

A high-fat diet, obesity, diabetes, and family history of the disease raise the likelihood of developing colon cancer, which is the second-leading cancer killer of men and is among the most difficult to detect, because it lacks symptoms in early stages. Men may decrease the risk of colorectal cancer through a regular exercise schedule and a healthy diet that includes plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole-grain foods while limiting high-fat foods, red meat, and alcohol consumption.

### **Continue Cancer Vigilance Throughout Life**

In addition to tobacco use, other unhealthy habits by young adult males can lead to problems as they age. One-third of cancer deaths are linked to poor nutrition, lack of exercise, and excess weight.

“Regular screenings and a healthy lifestyle are essential to help avoid debilitating cancer,” Dr. Doner said. “Clean, healthy living might not make a person the life of the party, but it certainly increases the chances of that person living longer with a higher quality of life.”

## **Seven Things Young Adult Men Should Do to Prevent Cancer**

1. Exercise regularly.
2. Eat a healthy diet with plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains while limiting intake of red meat or high-fat foods.
3. Avoid tobacco smoke and using any form of tobacco.
4. Avoid heavy consumption of alcohol. Men should either abstain from alcohol or limit alcohol use to the equivalent of no more than two beers a day.
5. Avoid unsafe sexual practices.
6. Be aware of changes or unusual symptoms that could point to a problem.
7. Identify a preferred doctor and make appointments for regular physical examinations and regular screenings.

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### **About Texas Oncology**

*Texas Oncology delivers high-quality cancer care with leading-edge technology and advanced treatment and therapy options available to help patients achieve “More breakthroughs. More victories.”® in their fights against cancer, right in their own communities. Texas Oncology, a pioneer in community-based cancer care, is an independent oncology practice with sites of service throughout Texas, southern New Mexico, and southeastern*

*Oklahoma. Texas Breast Specialists and Texas Urology Specialists, which focus on all areas of breast and urologic care, are a part of Texas Oncology.*

*Texas Oncology patients have the opportunity to take part in some of the most promising clinical trials in the nation for a broad range of cancers. Through its affiliation with US Oncology and the US Oncology Research network, Texas Oncology participates in innovative clinical trials from Phase I through Phase IV, and has played a role in the development of 43 Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approved cancer therapies.*

*Texas Oncology is united in healing with US Oncology, Inc., a division of McKesson Corporation. US Oncology unites the nation's largest community-based cancer treatment and research network. As an affiliate of the United Network of US Oncology, physicians and clinicians at Texas Oncology are united with more than 1,100 physicians and 10,000 cancer professionals from across the country.*

*For more information, visit [www.TexasOncology.com](http://www.TexasOncology.com) or call 1-888-864-I CAN (4226).*