

# Oregon Partnership for Cancer Control's In the News

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## Did you know...

- In 2005, 117 Oregonians died from melanoma
- Mortality rates from melanoma are significantly higher in the north central areas of Oregon
- The average age of death due to skin cancer in Oregon is 65

[All statistics from the Oregon Cancer Registry](#)

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## May is Melanoma/Skin Cancer Detection and Prevention Month

17-year-old Brittany Lietz was ready for her prom. She had the perfect dress, the perfect date and what she thought was the perfect tan. When she selected her long, white dress, she convinced herself that a deep, dark tan would be the perfect accessory.

To get this tan, Brittany started indoor tanning regularly for prom and kept going after the event. Her mom, however, warned her against using tanning beds and repeatedly asked her to stop. Like a typical teenager, Brittany went against her mother's wishes and used tanning beds anyway - four times a week for three years. Reflecting back on that experience, Brittany says she was addicted to tanning. And Brittany believes her addiction led to her fight against the deadliest form of skin cancer,

melanoma, just three years later.

"I never felt dark enough," she said. Brittany continued tanning, and at the age of 20, her mom noticed a mole on Brittany's back and encouraged her to visit a dermatologist. But Brittany was convinced the mole wasn't a serious problem. The results showed Brittany had stage II melanoma. She took time off from college to undergo surgery. The long surgery left her with a 7-inch scar. "I was in a lot of pain," she said. "My pictures after surgery are so graphic that some people have become physically ill looking at them."

Just a year after the surgery, Brittany competed for and won the title Miss Maryland 2006. Part of her motivation was to bring more awareness to skin can-

cer detection and prevention.

"Teenagers just don't listen to their parents. That's why it's our job as skin cancer survivors to step up," she said.

Now 23 - three years after her diagnosis - Brittany says the experience of battling cancer at such a young age has impacted her view on life.

"Life happens and life has done a lot of different things for me," she said. "As bad as my melanoma was, I also have been very fortunate to serve as Miss Maryland, which gave me a forum to educate my peers about the risks of indoor tanning."



## May is National Cancer Research Month



In recognition of the American Association for Cancer Research's Centennial, and its focus on every aspect of high-quality, innovative cancer research, the United States Congress officially declared the month of May as National Can-

cer Research Month.

The AACR secured resolutions from the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives to raise awareness of the critical advances in cancer research made by its 27,000 members and cancer researchers worldwide, and its efforts to ensure a secure future for continued progress against a group of

diseases which strike half of all men and one in three women.

These resolutions support the AACR's dissemination of new knowledge about cancer to speed translation of new scientific discoveries for the benefit of cancer patients and the 10 million cancer survivors living in America today.

## Local Survivor: Steve Mealey

After losing his mother and three aunts to colorectal cancer, Steve Mealey urged his youngest sister to get a colonoscopy. But she resisted, and it cost her her life.

“Inexplicably, she experienced my mother’s ill health and she chose not to have a colonoscopy,” Mealey said. “I can’t answer as to why. In her last year of life she knew it was a mistake and she regretted it.”

Determined to outlast the cancer, Mealey went in for his first screening in 1984, two years after his mother died of the disease in her native Ireland. He was only 42, and in great shape. Mealey, who has received a cancer screening test every year since, was diagnosed with a rare colon disease called ulcerative colitis.

Being in good condition, Mealey never would have gone in for that initial screening had it not been for the extensive family history of colon cancer.

“I actually thought of myself as being sort of a macho dude, and kind of invincible. I was strong and pretty full of myself. The last thing in my mind, the very last thing, was that I was unhealthy.”

Not surprisingly, Mealey today is a passionate advocate of the importance of colon cancer screenings. It’s why he met up Tuesday with two doctors at Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend to help kick off Colon Cancer Screening Awareness Month, as declared by Gov. Ted Kulogoski.

Without consistent screening, Mealey easily could have become one of the nearly 25,000 people who die of colon cancer annually.

The disease exhibits little or no symptoms at the beginning, Mirhej said, so catching the cancer early is impossible without consistent screening.

“With colon cancer, symptoms come

on very late,” Mirhej said. “Once symptoms appear, the disease is already too far along.”

A lot of people remain wary of having a colonoscopy, which entails an inspection of the intestinal tract using a thin flexible tube with a camera attached, known as a colonoscope, to look at the condition of the lining of the large intestine. But that should never dissuade people from having screening done, Evans said.

Men and women over the age of 50 and anyone with a family history of the disease — such as Mealey — are at the highest risk of developing colorectal cancer.



## Celebrity Advocate: Rachel Bilson

Actress Rachel Bilson is supporting a new initiative to raise awareness and funds for skin cancer research.

As part of the Glow in the Dark campaign being run by Jergens – the Cincinnati based manufacturer of health and beauty skin care products including lotions, skin cleansers, facial cleansers and moisturizers – Bilson

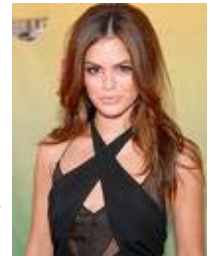


is promoting bottle tanning this summer in an effort to reduce rates of skin cancer.

‘Growing up in Southern California, getting tan was a big part of the culture,’ she told People.com. “Now being aware of how bad [it] is for your skin, you can still get that look and that glow without harming your body.’

Bilson was the first person to

take Jergens’ pledge – “I promise to give up bad tanning habits, practice sun safety, get a safe summer glow, and keep my skin hydrated” – on the company’s website



## Highlighted Program: The Alexandra Ellis Caring Cabin

The Alexandra Ellis Caring Cabin, the first of its kind in the Western U.S., was created to provide families a serene escape from the sterile environment and painful procedures of hospitals. The beautiful custom-designed cabin is nestled among 24 acres of peaceful wooded land in Pacific City, Oregon. The cabin features its own private lake



and is just minutes from the beach. The Caring Cabin is fully equipped to meet children’s medical needs and will be available at no cost to families. We look forward to working with individuals and organizations that wish to share in this vision, which will benefit hundreds of families for years to come.

If your child is receiving active

treatment for cancer or being treated with chemotherapy for a related blood disease, or is facing a terminal illness, we may be able to offer some comforting moments to your family

Please contact Melissa Owens for more information: [mowens@JoyRx.org](mailto:mowens@JoyRx.org)

# National News

## Prevention

[Poor Kids Exposed to More Secondhand Smoke](#)

[The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved the first DNA test that can identify the two high-risk types of human papillomavirus](#)

## Colorectal Cancer

[Colon Screenings Don't Follow Guidelines, Study Suggests](#)  
[Health Officials Spotlight Colorectal Cancer Screening](#)

## Breast Cancer

[Removing the Doubt](#)

[Dense Breasts Complicate Testing and Treatment](#)

## Skin Cancer

[Skin cancer now top cancer among young women in UK](#)

[Genes Hike Melanoma Risk Even in Those Who Tan Well](#)

[Older Men Need to Take Closer Look for Melanomas](#)

## Treatment

[Some U.K. patients denied costly cancer meds](#)

[Where you live may affect cancer survival](#)

## Disparities

[Race May Not Be Key in Cancer Disparities](#)

[Study Rates Breast Cancer Risks Among Races](#)

[Doctor-Patient Talks Key to Blacks Getting Cancer Screens](#)

[Minorities to Bear Brunt of Rise in U.S. Cancer Cases](#)

# Local News

[State closes Medford imaging clinic](#)

[Columbia Memorial receives Community Partner Grantee Award](#)

[Up in Smoke](#)

[Preventing the C-word](#)

[Livestrong at School](#)

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*We're on the web at [www.healthoregon.org/cancer](http://www.healthoregon.org/cancer)*

#### Events

[May 1 Free Head & Neck Cancer Screening](#)

[May 2 Asian/ Pacific Islander Health Equity & Reform Conference](#)

[May 4 Living Well with Cancer](#)

[May 4 Strategies for Publishing Research & Practice in the Journal & Beyond](#)

[May 5 Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Class for People Healing from Cancer](#)

[May 5 Unnatural Causes: Is Inequality Making Us Sick?](#)

[May 9 "Making Strides Against Breast Cancer" walk](#)

#### Resources

[Consumer Health Information in Multiple Languages Available from National Library of Medicine](#)

## Grant and Funding Opportunities

### 2009 Healthy Communities Grant Program

Environmental Protection Agency

Deadline May 8, 2009

**Full Proposals: June 30, 2009**

The Healthy Communities Grant Program is seeking projects that: Target resources to benefit communities at risk (environmental justice areas of potential concern, places with high risk from toxic air pollution, urban areas) and sensitive populations (e.g. children, elderly, others at increased risk). Assess, understand, and reduce environmental and human health risks. Increase collaboration through commu-

nity-based projects. Build institutional and community capacity to understand and solve environment and human health problems. Achieve measurable environmental and human health benefits. Proposed projects must: (1) Be located in and/or directly benefit one or more of the three Target Investment Areas which include: Environmental Justice Areas of Potential Concern, Sensitive Populations, and/or Urban Areas in one or more of the EPA Region I States of Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and/or

Vermont; and (2) Identify how the proposed project will achieve measurable environmental and/or public health results in one or more of the six Target Program Areas which include Asthma, Capacity Building on Environmental and Public Health Issues, Clean Energy, Healthy Indoor/Outdoor Environments, Healthy Schools, Urban Natural Resources and Open/Green Space.

