

**Female Breast Cancer Briefing Document**  
**Presented to the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities**  
**September 20, 2007**

**Female breast cancer** is characterized by an uncontrolled growth of neoplastic (abnormal) cells in a woman's breast that have the potential to spread to other parts of her body.

**CRITERION #1: PREVALENCE / INCIDENCE**

- The incidence rate for breast cancer in Washington increased somewhat steadily from 154.2 in 1992 to 186.7 in 1999. More recently, rates appear to be decreasing with rates of 170.1 in 2003 and 164.5 in 2004.
- In 2004, there were 5,401 new cases of female breast cancer in Washington, making breast cancer the most frequently diagnosed cancer among Washington women.
- In 2004, 73% of Washington women ages 40 and older reported having a mammogram within the past two years, exceeding the *Healthy People 2010* goal of 70%.

**CRITERION #2: SEVERITY**

- In 2005, 791 women died of breast cancer in Washington State, for an overall age-adjusted death rate of 23 per 100,000 women.
- Since 1989, mortality rates for breast cancer in Washington have decreased.
- Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death among Washington women.

**CRITERION #3: DISPARITY**

- In the years 2000-2004 combined, the age-adjusted incidence rate for breast cancer in Washington was significantly higher for whites (175 per 100,000) than for any other race except Native Americans/Alaska Natives (152.3 per 100,000). Blacks had the next highest rate (146.8 per 100,000), followed by Asian/Pacific Islanders (119 per 100,000) and Hispanics (111.9 per 100,000).
- The index of disparity for incidence by race and ethnicity was 32.5% in the years 2000-2004.
- From 2003-2005 combined, the age-adjusted mortality rate (per 100,000 population) for breast cancer in Washington was 39.0 for American Indian/Alaska Natives, 26.8 for blacks, 23.9 for whites, 17.1 for Hispanics, and 14.7 for Asian/Pacific Islander women, for an index of disparity of 81.6%.
- In Washington, the disparity in death rates between white women and African American women is increasing as the death rate decreases for whites but not for African Americans.
- Washington cancer data are not available for subgroups of the Asian and Pacific Islander category; however, national research has found foreign born Asian and Pacific Islander women are more likely to be diagnosed with later-stage disease than U.S born women.
- Washington data on mammography screening by race/ethnicity are not available; however, national data suggest that African American women may be less likely to be screened adequately or have appropriate follow-up.
- For 2002-2004, African American and American Indian and Alaska Native women were less likely to be diagnosed with localized (or *in situ*) disease than white or Asian Pacific Islander women.

**The Index of Disparity** is the average of the difference in rates between the racial/ethnic group with the "best" rate and all other racial/ethnic groups.

*Keppel KG et al., Measuring progress in healthy people 2010. Statistical Notes, no 25. NCHS, 2004*