

Colorectal Cancer Briefing Document
Presented to the Governor's Interagency Council on Health Disparities
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Colorectal cancer, or cancer of the colon or rectum, is characterized by an uncontrolled growth of neoplastic (abnormal) cells in the lower segment of the digestive tract, with potential to invade and spread to other sites.

CRITERION #1: PREVALENCE / INCIDENCE

- The age-adjusted incidence rate for colorectal cancer in Washington decreased from 57 cases per 100,000 in 1992 to 47 cases per 100,000 in 2004.
- In 2004, there were 2,775 new cases of colorectal cancer, making colorectal cancer the fourth leading cause of cancer in Washington State.
- According to data from 2006, 32% of Washington residents ages 50 and older received a fecal occult blood test in the previous two years and 64% reported ever having a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy.

CRITERION #2: SEVERITY

- In 2005, 946 Washington residents died of colorectal cancer, for an age-adjusted death rate of 15 per 100,000.
- Since 1992, mortality rates for colorectal cancer in Washington have decreased steadily, averaging a decline of 2.6% per year.
- Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in Washington.

CRITERION #3: DISPARITY

- In the years 2003-2005 combined, the age-adjusted incidence rates (per 100,000 residents) for colorectal cancer in Washington was significantly higher for American Indian and Alaska Natives (59) and blacks (57) than for whites (47), Asians and Pacific Islanders (41), and Hispanics (31), for an Index of Disparity of 64%.
- From 2003-2005, the age-adjusted mortality rate (per 100,000 population) for colorectal cancer in Washington was 29 for American Indian/Alaska Natives, 25 for blacks, 17 for Hispanics, 16 for whites and 15 for Asian/Pacific Islanders, for an index of disparity of 45%.
- In Washington, blacks are 70% less likely to report having received screening for colorectal cancer than whites. Hispanics and individuals in other racial groups had screening rates that were comparable to whites.
- From 2002-2004, age-adjusted incidence rates for colorectal cancer were higher for Washington men (55 cases per 100,000) than for women (43 cases were 100,000).
- In 2004, the death rate was higher for Washington men (19.0 deaths per 100,000) than for women (14.4 deaths per 100,000).

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