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DO LUNG CANCER SCREENING TESTS SAVE LIVES?

*The National Cancer Institute, With the Help
Of The Cancer Institute of New Jersey, Intends to Find Out*

NEW BRUNSWICK, N.J.- NOVEMBER 11, 2003 – The Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ) in partnership with UMDNJ- Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and University Radiology Group (URG), today announced the launch of The National Lung Screening Trial (NLST). The study, originated by The National Cancer Institute (NCI) late last year, is designed to determine if screening people with either spiral computerized tomography (CT) or chest X-ray before they have symptoms can reduce deaths from lung cancer.

As the only site in New Jersey and one of only thirty-six sites across the country conducting the study, CINJ is looking for current or former smokers age 55-74 to participate in NLST. Participants will be randomized to receive either a spiral CT or a chest x-ray once a year for three years, with periodic follow-up to evaluate health status until 2009. Men and women who meet the following criteria can take part in NLST:

- Current or former smokers ages 55 to 74
- Have never had lung cancer and have not had any cancer within the last five years (except some skin cancers or in situ cancers)
- Not currently enrolled in any other cancer screening or cancer prevention trial
- Have not had a CT scan of the chest or lungs within the last 18 months

“The National Lung Screening Trial is an important study because of the large number of people at high risk for developing lung cancer,” said Joseph Aisner, M.D., Associate Director for Clinical Science, CINJ, Professor and Chief of Medical Oncology in the Dept. of Medicine, UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, and NLST Co- Investigator. “We are eager to be a part of a study that has the potential to prevent such a devastating cancer.”

Approximately 90 million former and current smokers in the United States are at high risk for developing lung cancer, a disease that, each year, kills more people than cancers of the breast, prostate, colon and pancreas combined. The goal of the National Lung Screening Trial (NLST) is to develop a centralized and effective way to detect lung cancer at the earliest possible stage and ultimately reduce the mortality rate of the disease.

A chest X-ray is a well-established method of imaging the chest and is commonly used for lung screening tests. Spiral CT, a technology introduced in the 1990s, uses X-rays to scan the entire chest in about 15 to 25 seconds, during a single breath-hold. A computer then creates a 3-dimensional model of the lungs, making it easier to detect smaller and more lung abnormalities than a standard chest X-ray. In theory, identifying dangerous abnormalities and immediately treating them can save lives.

“Many hospitals are already using spiral CT machines as a means to stage lung and other cancers,” explained Judith Amorosa, NLST Principal Investigator. “It is our job to help prove if this truly is the most effective tool for lung cancer screening and prevention.”

Since this trial is sponsored by ACRIN (American College of Radiology Imaging Network), the initial imaging test (either chest X-ray or CT) and one and two-year follow-up exams do not cost anything to the participant. If an abnormality is found, further evaluation is paid for by insurance.

For more information about the National Lung Screening Trial, visit the National Cancer Institute’s website at www.cancer.gov/nlst. To find out if you qualify to participate in the study, please contact The Cancer Institute of New Jersey at 1-866-654-9898 and select option #2.

Leading the war against cancer is The Cancer Institute of New Jersey, the state’s first and only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center. CINJ is dedicated to improving the prevention, detection, treatment and care of patients with cancer, through the transformation of laboratory discoveries into clinical practice. CINJ’s Providers’ Network is comprised of twenty Partner and Affiliate institutions throughout the state and provides a mechanism to rapidly disseminate important, valid discoveries into the community.

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