

Pickens County Herald

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SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS

Free prostate cancer screening offered Feb. 4

Men over 40 are invited to take 10 minutes to have a free prostate cancer screening on Saturday, Feb. 4 between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. at the Pickens County Health Department, located at 80 William E. Hill Drive, Carrollton.

Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer in men, but it is one of the most treatable when caught in its early stages. The screening usually takes only about 10 minutes.

Statistics show that detecting prostate cancer early, through physical exams and blood tests, can mean a 95 percent survival

rate if the disease remains confined to the organ.

Prostate cancer is a disease that will affect one out of every six men (one in four African American men) at some point in their lives, and more than 33,720 will die from prostate cancer this year. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related death among men in the United States. In Alabama, 539 men died of prostate cancer in 2010.

According to Dr. Thomas Moody, president of Urology

Health Foundation, regular screenings for prostate cancer are crucial because the disease typically produces no symptoms until the cancer is in its more advanced stages. He states, "The percentage of men getting screened in Alabama has been low. Our death rate from prostate cancer is the third highest in the nation, and we believe it is related to the number of men who are not getting screened."

Because there are no noticeable symptoms of prostate can-

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cer while it is still in the early stages Dr. Moody states that is why screening is so critical. In more advanced stages, symptoms may include difficult or frequent urination, blood in the urine or bone pain. Every man age 40 or over should resolve to be screened annually.

Screening for prostate cancer involves a simple blood test called a PSA that measures the level of protein called prostate-specific antigen in the blood. Normally PSA is found in the blood at very low levels. Elevated PSA readings can be a sign of prostate cancer. A physical examination is also given to detect prostate cancer. These tests take approximately 10 minutes to perform and could save a man's life.

The prostate screening clinics are provided free of charge to all men regardless of insurance.

For those men whose screenings reveal potential problems, follow-up procedures will be recommended. If a man is unable to afford follow-up procedures, Dr. Moody and the association will provide care.