

### What is cervical cancer?

Cancer is a disease in which cells in the body grow out of control. Cancer is always named for the part of the body where it starts, even if it spreads to other body parts later. When cancer starts in the cervix, it is called cervical cancer. The cervix connects the vagina (birth canal) to the upper part of the uterus. The uterus (or womb) is where a baby grows when a woman is pregnant. All women are at risk for cervical cancer. It occurs most often in women over age 30.

### Risk factors<sup>1</sup>

Almost all cervical cancers are caused by human papillomavirus (HPV), a common virus that can be passed from one person to another during sex. There are many types of HPV. Some HPV types can cause changes on a woman's cervix that can lead to cervical cancer over time, while other types can cause genital or skin warts.

HPV is so common that most people get it at some time in their lives. HPV usually causes no symptoms so you can't tell that you have it. For most women, HPV will go away on its own; however, if it does not, there is a chance that over time it may cause cervical cancer.

Other things can increase your risk of cervical cancer—

- ✓ Having HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) or another condition that makes it hard for your body to fight off health problems.
- ✓ Smoking.
- ✓ Using birth control pills for a long time (five or more years).
- ✓ Having given birth to three or more children.
- ✓ Having several sexual partners.

### Signs and symptoms<sup>1</sup>

- Early on, cervical cancer may not cause signs and symptoms. Advanced cervical cancer may cause bleeding or discharge from the vagina that is not normal for you, such as bleeding after sex. If you have any of these signs, see your doctor. They may be caused by something other than cancer, but the only way to know is to see your doctor. Persistent changes to the breast, such as skin changes, swelling, skin irritation, pain and abnormal discharge.

### Prevention and early detection<sup>1</sup>

Screening tests and the HPV vaccine can help prevent cervical cancer. When cervical cancer is found early, it is highly treatable and associated with long survival and good quality of life

#### South Carolina Quick Facts

- Cervical cancer is the 14<sup>th</sup> most commonly diagnosed cancer among women.
- It is the 14<sup>th</sup> most common cause of cancer death among women.
- South Carolina ranked 12<sup>th</sup> in the nation for cervical cancer mortality in the 2013-2017 time period.

*Screening is extremely important for early detection and treatment.*

- Black women have a higher rate of getting cervical cancer (20%) than white women. Black women are nearly twice as likely to die from it (90%) than white women.



The Best Chance Network (BCN) provides breast cancer screenings (ages 30-64) and cervical cancer screenings (ages 21-64) for women with incomes at or below 250% of the federal poverty level who meet other eligibility guidelines.

- Since its inception on January 1, 1991:
  - ✓ Over 136,900 women have received services.
  - ✓ Over 107,800 cervical services provided.

## Cervical cancer facts in South Carolina

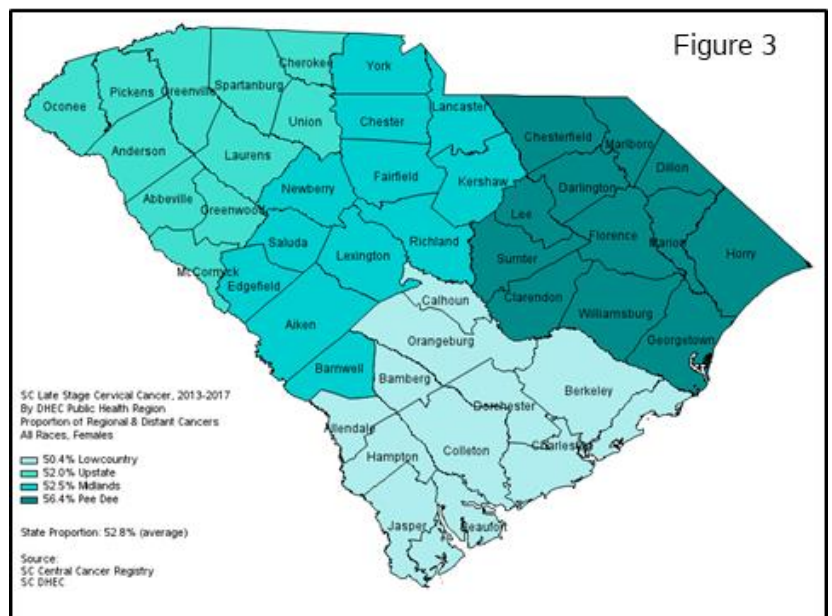
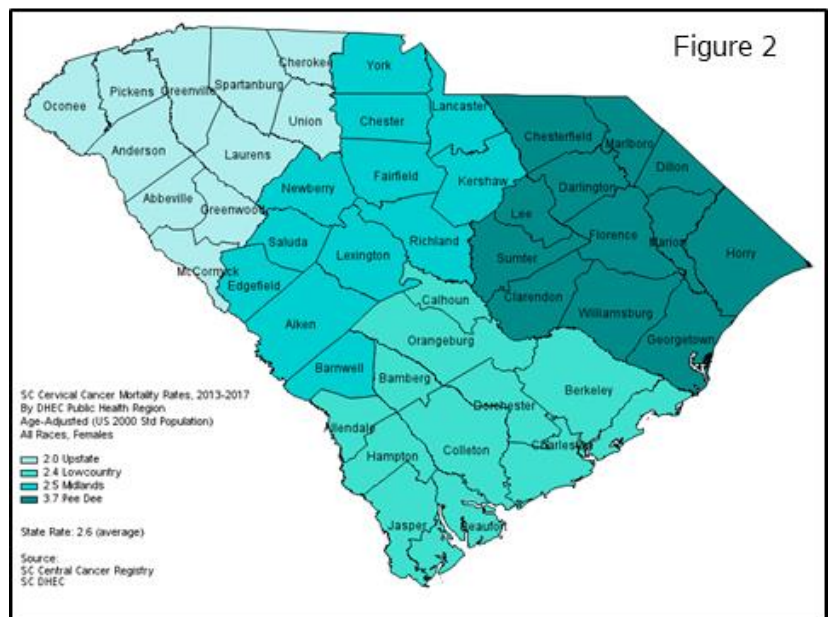
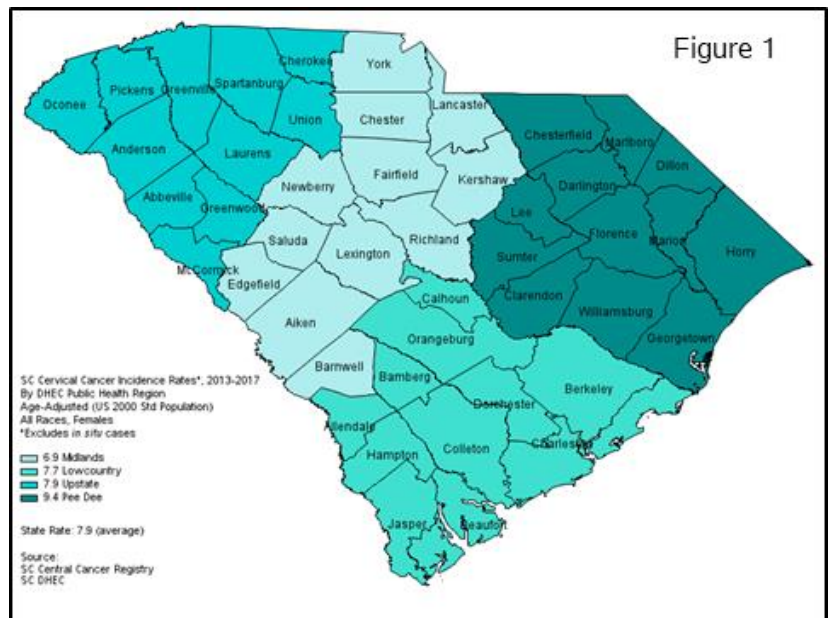
- Cervical cancer is the 14<sup>th</sup> most commonly diagnosed cancer among women in South Carolina and the U.S. It is the 14<sup>th</sup> most common cause of cancer related death in South Carolina and 15<sup>th</sup> in the U.S.<sup>2</sup>

### *Incidence (rate of new cases):*

- The cervical cancer incidence rate (2013-2017) is higher in South Carolina compared to the U.S. (7.9 vs. 7.6 cases per 100,000 women, respectively).<sup>4</sup>
- Figure 1 displays cervical cancer incidence rates in South Carolina's 4 health regions.<sup>3</sup> The Pee Dee region had the highest incidence rate (9.4 cases per 100,000 women), and the Midlands region had the lowest (6.9 cases per 100,000 women).<sup>3</sup>
- The cervical cancer incidence rate is higher in white women than black women (9.0 vs. 7.5 cases per 100,000 women, respectively) (Figure 4).<sup>3</sup>

### *Mortality:*

- The cervical cancer mortality rate (2013-2017) is higher in South Carolina compared to the U.S. overall (2.6 vs. 2.3/100,000).<sup>5</sup>
- Figure 2 displays cervical cancer mortality rates in South Carolina's 4 public health regions.<sup>2</sup> The Pee Dee region had the highest mortality rate (3.7 deaths per 100,000 women), and the Upstate region had the lowest (2.0 deaths per 100,000 women).<sup>3</sup>
- The cervical cancer mortality rate (2013-2017) is higher in black women than white women (2.1 vs. 4.0 deaths per 100,000 women, respectively) (Figure 5).<sup>3</sup>



**Survival:**

- Nationally, when diagnosed at an early stage, the five-year relative survival rate for cervical cancer is about 92%.<sup>1</sup> In South Carolina (2013-2017), about 41% of cervical cancers diagnosed are diagnosed at an early stage.<sup>3</sup>
- Figure 3 displays the percent of cervical cancer cases diagnosed at *late stage* in South Carolina’s 4 health regions.<sup>3</sup> The Pee Dee region had the highest percentage of cervical cancer being diagnosed at late stage in South Carolina (65.4%), the Lowcountry the lowest (50.4%).<sup>3</sup>
- Black women with cervical cancer are more likely to be diagnosed at late stage than white women (61.4% and 49.2%, respectively) (Figure 6).<sup>3</sup>

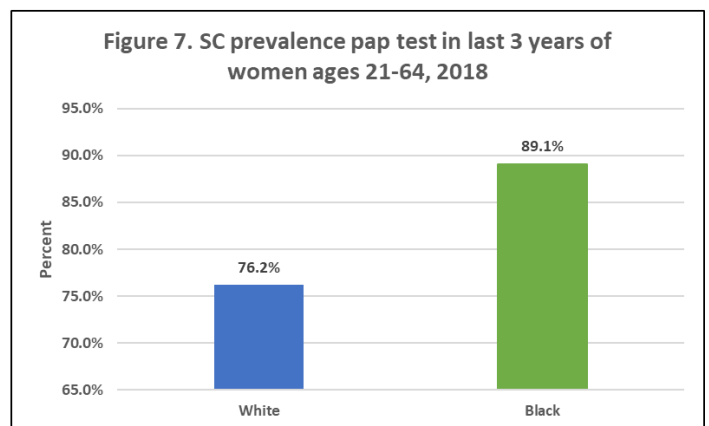
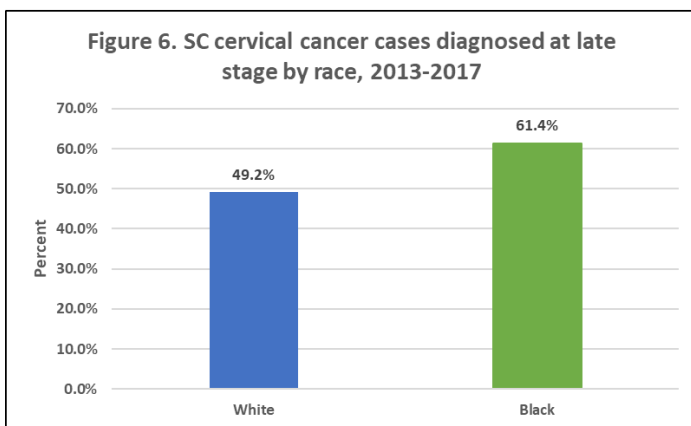
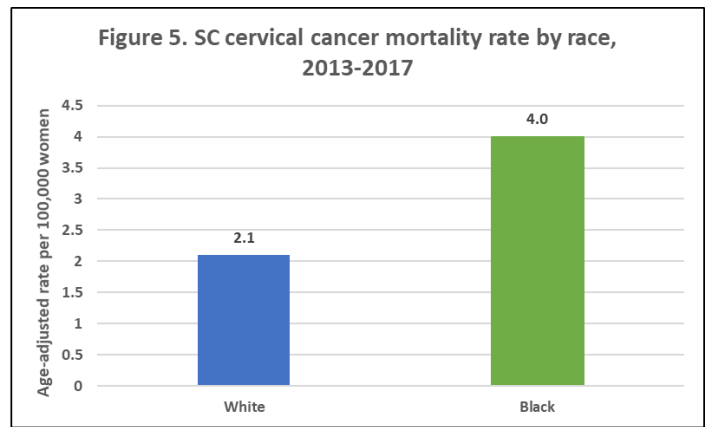
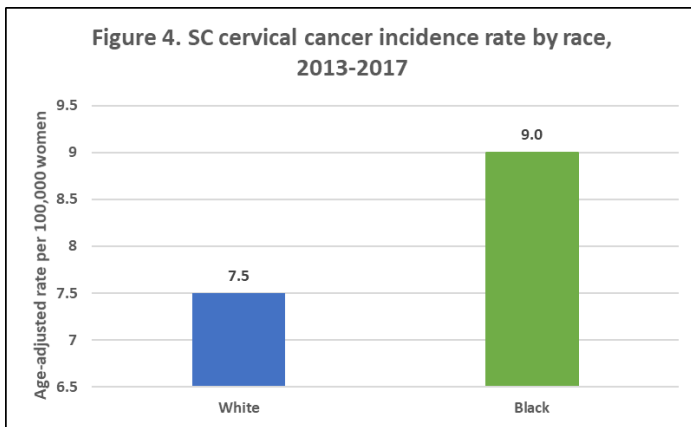
**Cancer screening:**

- In 2018, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reported that 80.8% of South Carolina women aged 21-65 years had a pap test in the past 3 years (U.S. average = 80.2%).<sup>7</sup>
- In South Carolina, black women 21-64 years reported higher use of mammogram screening in the past two years than white women (89.1% and 76.2%, respectively) (Figure 7).<sup>6</sup>

**Economic burden:**

- Primary diagnoses of cervical cancer for inpatient hospitalizations cost more than \$31 million dollars in South Carolina during 2019:
  - ✓ Inpatient hospitalizations: 533 women
  - ✓ Average length of stay: 3.4 days
  - ✓ Average charge per stay: \$54,361.<sup>8</sup>

**Racial differences:**



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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control, Cervical Cancer

<sup>2</sup> American Cancer Society, Cancer Facts & Figures 2020. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2020.

<sup>3</sup> South Carolina Central Cancer Registry, Bureau of Population Health Data Analytics & Informatics, Dept. of Health & Environmental Control, based on combined incidence data from 2013-2017.

<sup>4</sup> National Program of Cancer Registries and Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results SEER\*Stat Database: NPCR and SEER Incidence - U.S. Cancer Statistics 2001-2017 Public Use Research Database, 2019 Submission (2001-2017), United States Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Cancer Institute. Released June 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results (SEER) Program ([www.seer.cancer.gov](http://www.seer.cancer.gov)) SEER\*Stat Database: Mortality - All COD, Aggregated With State, Total U.S. (1990-2017) <Katrina/Rita Population Adjustment>, National Cancer Institute, DCCPS, Surveillance Research Program, Surveillance Systems Branch, released December 2019. Underlying mortality data provided by NCHS ([www.cdc.gov/nchs](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs)).

<sup>6</sup> South Carolina Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, Bureau of Population Health Data Analytics & Informatics, Dept. of Health & Environmental Control, 2018.

<sup>7</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System Data. Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2018.

<sup>8</sup> South Carolina Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office, Hospital Discharge Patient-Level Dataset.

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**For more information on cancer prevention and management, please contact:**

**Division of Cancer Prevention and Control, SC DHEC. 2100 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201 | 803.898.1615 | <http://www.scdhec.gov/Health/DiseasesandConditions/Cancer/>**

**American Cancer Society: [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) | 1.800.227.2345**

**For more information on cancer data and statistics for South Carolina, please contact:**

**South Carolina Central Cancer Registry, SC DHEC. 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, SC 29201 | 803.898.8000 | [cancer.registry@dhec.sc.gov](mailto:cancer.registry@dhec.sc.gov)**

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/>**