

## **Introduction:**

Oral cancer is any cancerous tissue growth located in the mouth, tongue, lips, throat, parts of the nose, or larynx. Each year more than 30,000 new cases of oral cancer are diagnosed in the United States and it is the 8th most common cancer diagnosis in men.<sup>1</sup> It is estimated about 36,000 people will be diagnosed with oral or oropharyngeal cancer in 2013.<sup>2</sup> Over 8,000 deaths occur because of oral cancer each year. The 5-year survival rate for oral cancer is approximately 50%. Detection of oral lesions at earlier stages of development is associated with much more favorable oral cancer survival rates.<sup>1</sup>

### **HPV and Oral Cancer**

The human papilloma virus (HPV) is an infection that can be transmitted through sexual contact, unwashed hands and saliva. HPV 16 and 18 has been linked to oral cancer. It is estimated over 50% of all oral cancers are associated with HPV lesions. A vaccine is now available to prevent infections from HPV 16 and 18.<sup>2</sup>

## **Signs and Symptoms:**

- ◆ Unusual lumps or bumps in the mouth; wart-like masses; mouth sores that do not heal
- ◆ Pain or difficulty in swallowing or chewing
- ◆ Unusual nose bleeds or other bleeding from oral cavity
- ◆ Distortion of any of the senses; numbness in oral or facial regions
- ◆ Sore throat, hoarseness, ear pain
- ◆ Progressive swelling; enlarged lymph nodes; shifting of teeth<sup>1,3</sup>

## **Risk Factors:**

- ◆ Tobacco smoking
- ◆ Excessive alcohol consumption
- ◆ Gender (twice as common in men)
- ◆ Age
- ◆ Poor oral hygiene
- ◆ Oral HPV infection (see box above)<sup>3,6</sup>

## **Screening:**

Many pre-cancers and cancers can be found early during routine screening exams by a dentist, doctor, dental hygienist, or by a medical professional. Early detection is the key to saving lives from oral cancer. Early detection of oropharyngeal cancer significantly increases the five-year survival rate.<sup>2</sup>

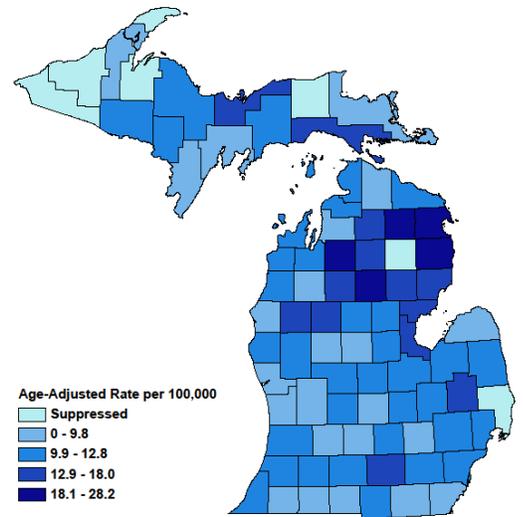
### **Dental and Other Health Providers**

- ◆ Routinely review health histories and determine risks
- ◆ Provide intra- and extra-oral soft tissue examinations, identify suspicious oral lesions and refer patients for biopsies to determine a diagnosis
- ◆ Recommend the HPV vaccination: Target ages 11-12 years old
- ◆ Continue to provide advice and guidance to patients regarding known risks for oral and oropharyngeal cancers from smoking and heavy alcohol consumption.<sup>2,4</sup>

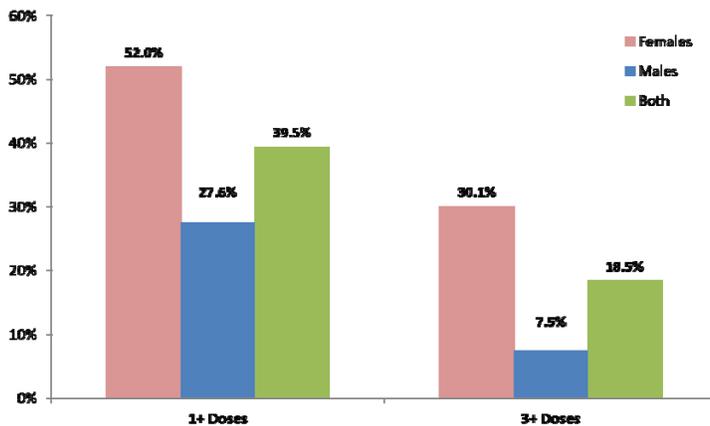
**Prevalence in Michigan:**

- In 2010, there were 1,344 new cases of oral cancer diagnosed in Michigan, a 6% increase from 2009.
- Males have a significantly higher incidence rate of oral cancer compared to females (17.3 per 100,000 vs 6.5 per 100,000).
- The 5-year age-adjusted incidence rate by county ranged from 28.2 per 100,000 in Montmorency to 6.1 per 100,000 in Clinton County (see map).<sup>4</sup>

**Oral Cancer Age-Adjusted Incidence Rates for Michigan by County, 2006-2010**



**HPV Vaccination Rates in Michigan  
MCIR Data as of October 2013  
Children Aged 13-17 years**



2012 US Census Population used as Denominator

- 39.5% of the Michigan youth have received at least one HPV vaccination dose and 18.5% have received all three (30.1% female and 7.5% male), see figure.
- 48.4% of the HPV vaccinations in these Michigan youth were administered in a family practice and 34.3% at a pediatrics clinic.<sup>5</sup>

**Healthy People 2020:**

Healthy People provides science-based, 10-year national objectives for improving health of all Americans. There are currently two Healthy People 2020 objectives related to oral cancer:

- ◆ Increase the proportion of oral and pharyngeal cancers detected at the earliest stage.
- ◆ Increase the proportion of adults who received an oral and pharyngeal cancer screening from a dentist or dental hygienist in the past year.<sup>3</sup>

**References:**

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Division of Oral Health: [www.cdc.gov/oralhealth](http://www.cdc.gov/oralhealth)
2. American Cancer Society: [www.cancer.org/cancer/oralcavityandoropharyngealcancer/](http://www.cancer.org/cancer/oralcavityandoropharyngealcancer/)
3. US Department of Health and Human Services. Healthy People 2020: [www.healthypeople.gov](http://www.healthypeople.gov)
4. Michigan Department of Community Health. Michigan Cancer Surveillance Program. 2006-2010
5. Michigan Department of Community Health. Michigan Care Improvement Registry
6. 2011 MDCH Oral Cancer Fact Sheet; Michigan Department of Community Health