

Genetic Testing for Breast and Ovarian Cancer – Get the Facts

Some cancers seem to run in families, with several family members getting the disease, often across generations. Meanwhile, other families remain untouched by cancer. Sorting out the facts can get confusing.

About 5 to 10 Percent of Cancers Are Inherited

Changes, called mutations, in our genes sometimes cause hereditary cancer – cancer that can run in families. Individuals with gene changes may be more likely to develop either breast and/or ovarian cancers.

Genetic testing looks for changes in genes that may increase cancer risk. For breast and ovarian cancers, genetic testing for the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes can tell if you have the gene changes that increase your risk for these diseases.

If you're thinking about genetic testing, remember that only about 5 to 10 percent of cancers are hereditary.

Not Everyone Needs Genetic Testing

Usually only people with a strong family history of cancer should be tested. Most cancer is sporadic, meaning it occurs by chance. People with sporadic cancer don't inherit any gene changes that increase their cancer risk. It's important to know your family's history of disease, including which types of cancer family members have had. Talk to your doctor or a genetic counselor if:

- You had breast cancer before age 50
- You had breast and ovarian cancer
- Two or more close relatives had breast and/or ovarian cancer (mother, sister, daughter)
- Any men in your family had breast cancer
- You are of Ashkenazi Jewish descent
- A family member has been tested and has a change in a BRCA gene

If you're tested and you don't have BRCA gene changes, you still may get cancer. Other things can cause cancer besides heredity, and genetic testing only checks for hereditary cancers by revealing changes in the BRCA genes.

Information Is the Key

Health care providers specializing in hereditary cancers can discuss appropriate testing, screening and prevention recommendations for families with hereditary cancer.

The nation's only producer of genetic tests for breast and ovarian cancer recently launched a direct-to-consumer marketing campaign in Texas, and health care providers are helping educate individuals about who may benefit from this testing.

Texas Cancer Information (www.texasancer.info) can tell you about:

- Where to find information about cancer and genetics
- Where to find a genetic counselor
- Links to reliable Web sites

Resources

- American Cancer Society (www.cancer.org, 1-800-ACS-2345)
- FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered, Inc. (www.facingourrisk.org)
- National Cancer Institute (www.cancer.gov)
- National Cancer Institute's Cancer Information Service (1-800-4-CANCER)
- National Society of Genetic Counselors (www.nsgc.org)
- Texas Cancer Information (www.texasancer.info)
- Texas Department of State Health Services (www.dshs.state.tx.us)
- The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center (www.mdanderson.org)

In this issue:

Genetic Testing for Breast and Ovarian Cancer – Get the Facts	1
Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas Replaces Texas Cancer Council	2
American Cancer Society Prepares New Facts & Figures	2
Monthly Focus Highlights Cancer Awareness	2
Get to Know Us — Carolyn Bernard, CPHIMS	3
What's New	3
Conference Calendar	4

Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas Replaces Texas Cancer Council *New State Agency Launches Web Site*

Last fall's passage of Proposition 15 ushered in new infrastructure to manage the state's cancer initiatives — the [Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas \(CPRIT\)](#).

The new agency, which replaces the former Texas Cancer Council (TCC), is authorized to issue \$3 billion in general obligation bonds over 10 years to fund cancer and cancer prevention research, as well as build new research labs.

CPRIT will continue implementing the [Texas Cancer Plan](#), the statewide blueprint for cancer prevention and control that the TCC has overseen.

[CPRIT](#) launched its Web site in August, www.cprit.state.tx.us. [Texas Cancer Information \(TCI\)](#) maintained the TCC Web site for more than 10 years, and TCI and CPRIT staff worked together to develop the new CPRIT site.

What's Available on CPRIT Web Site

Currently, you can find these components on the Web site:

- [Funding Opportunities](#)
- [Useful Links](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [News](#)
- [Board](#)
- [Meeting Agendas & Minutes](#). [TCC meeting minutes](#) are archived on the CPRIT Web site
- [Agency](#)
- [Laws, Rules & Guidelines](#)
- [Texas Cancer Plan](#)
- [Currently Funded Projects](#)
- [Previously Funded Projects](#)
- [Reports and Statistics \(coming soon\)](#)
- Link to [Texans Conquer Cancer Specialty License Plate](#) Web site

American Cancer Society Prepares New Facts & Figures

Each year, the [American Cancer Society \(ACS\)](#) produces a cancer tool used nationwide by cancer researchers, healthcare professionals and individuals — the [ACS Facts & Figures](#) publication.

A sister publication to this national version is the [Texas Cancer Facts & Figures](#), last published in 2004 and currently in production for 2008. Following publication of the print version, look for a Web-based version on the Texas Cancer Information (TCI) [Statistics](#) page.

The state version, [Texas Cancer Facts & Figures](#), began in 2004 when ACS Texas Division worked with several state entities to compile information from their respective organizations, streamlining this information into one publication.

Until then, several agencies had produced their own publications. Organizations involved included the former [Texas Cancer Council \(TCC\)](#), [Texas Department of State Health Services](#), [Texas Cancer Registry](#), [The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center](#) and [Texas Cancer Data Center](#) — now [TCI](#).

This year, these groups and two others — [Cancer Therapy and Research Center](#) at [UT Health Science Center \(UTHSC\) at San Antonio](#) and [Dan L. Duncan Cancer Center](#) at [Baylor College of Medicine](#) — collaborated to update Cancer Facts & Figures. As in the 2004 edition, TCI provided several maps and statistics about Texas cancer resources.

Monthly Focus Highlights Cancer Awareness

Tune in to the [Monthly Focus](#) section on the Texas Cancer Information home page for updated information that aligns with national cancer awareness months.

Look for genetics, inflammatory breast cancer and tobacco cessation/lung cancer during the fall.

In [Monthly Focus](#), you'll find links specific to each topic featured for that month. Past topics include cancer control and minority cancer awareness, prostate cancer awareness, breast cancer awareness and more. In the coming months, look for these topics: skin cancer, physical activity, nutrition and survivorship.

Get to Know Us — Carolyn Bernard, CPHIMS

Long before ubiquitous iPod earphones trailed from every teenage ear, Carolyn Bernard, CPHIMS, developed the first version of Texas Cancer Data Center (TCDC) as a dial-up bulletin board system with two databases, one on hospitals and one on physicians.

If you now view dial-up bulletin boards like stone tablets from a bygone millennium, you'll appreciate Carolyn's challenges of integrating new technologies on an ongoing basis to accommodate today's digitally-savvy, plugged-in society.

In her role as Systems Analyst III, Carolyn holds responsibility for designing, developing, maintaining and expanding [Texas Cancer Information \(TCI\)](#) system capabilities, as well as all TCI-supported Web sites.

You know the TCI Web site, use the resources there and have come to rely on its cancer information about Texas to help you do your job or find the resources you need.

The face behind the scenes, Carolyn has spearheaded maintenance of all aspects of the database system – then Web site – since 1986. Her qualifications include earning a Rice University degree with a double major in computer

science and mathematical sciences. Additionally, she earned the CPHIMS designation that stands for Certified Professional in Healthcare Information and Management Systems.

For the past two decades, Carolyn has helped expand TCI – formerly TCDC – content, capabilities and reach throughout the Web. Currently 43 online databases populate TCI, and this number is growing.

Carolyn serves as Webmaster for [TCI](#), [Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas \(CPRIT\)](#), [Texans Conquer Cancer Specialty License Plate](#) and [Texas Cancer Control Toolkit](#) sites.

Additionally, she develops cancer statistics databases and prepares special reports on cancer statistics and resources, such as [Cancer Profiles](#), maps for [Texas Cancer Facts & Figures](#) and the CPRIT strategic plan.

When not at work, Carolyn enjoys spending time with husband Karl and 7th-grade son Justin.

What's New

- [Access to Cancer Care](#) (updates and more counties)

New Counties:

- [Bell County](#)
- [Bexar County](#)
- [Gregg County](#)
- [Lubbock County](#)
- [Potter County](#)
- [Randall County](#)
- [Smith County](#)
- [Tarrant County](#)
- [Val Verde County](#)
- [Webb County](#)
- [Genetic Testing and Cancer](#) page
- [Texas Tobacco Control Plan 2008: A statewide action plan for tobacco prevention and control in Texas](#) (on CPRIT Web site, www.cprit.state.tx.us)

- [Links by Topic:](#)

Adding these Topics:

- Health disparities
- Environmental tobacco smoke policies
- Smoke-free cities, hotels, states and nations

Expanding these Topics:

- Pain management and palliative care
- African Americans and cancer
- Hispanics and cancer
- Priority populations
- Early detection and screening
- Cervical cancer
- Tobacco use

Conference Calendar

Physician Oncology Program (POEP) / Texas Medical Association (TMA)

- Sept. 5 - 6 [2008 TMA Fall Conference](#)
Hyatt Regency Austin
- Sept. 10 -
Oct. 16 [Medical Records and the Texas Medical Board](#), Several locations throughout Texas
- Sept. 25 -
Nov. 11 [The Coding Audio Seminar Series](#)
Telephone Seminar
- Oct. 3 - 4 [Transitions in Medical Practice: Frustrations and Opportunities](#)
Horseshoe Bay Resort Marriot
- Jan. 30 - 31 [2009 TMA Winter Conference](#)
Hyatt Regency Austin
- May 1 - 2 [TexMed 2009](#)
Hilton Austin and Austin Convention Center

The University of Texas M. D. Anderson Cancer Center

- Sept. 4 - 6 [Anderson Network: Living Fully With and Beyond Cancer](#), Houston
- Sept. 27 [Hereditary Breast, Gynecologic and Colon Cancer Syndromes: Identification and Management of Your At-Risk Patients](#)
Houston
- Sept. 30 -
Oct. 2 [Intensive Board Review Course in Hospice & Palliative Medicine](#), Houston
- Oct. 1 - 2 [Pain and Symptom Management in Patients with Advance Disease: Clinical Review for Hospice and Palliative Care Nurses](#), Houston
- Oct. 3 - 4 [12th Annual Interdisciplinary Approach to Symptom Control, Palliative and Hospice Care Conference](#), Houston

Nurse Oncology Education Program (NOEP)

- Sept. 12 [Breast Cancer Review](#), Lubbock
- Sept. 13 [10th Annual West Texas Oncology Symposium](#), Lubbock
- Sept. 25 [Texas Nurse Practitioners Conference](#)
Austin
- Oct. 3 [Amarillo Area Cancer Symposium](#)
Amarillo
- Oct. 30 [Frontiers in Pain Management](#), Austin
- Dec. 5 [A Common Thread 2008 - Palliative and End-of-Life Care](#), Dallas

Texas Tumor Registrars Association (TxTRA)

- Sept 10 - 12 [36th Annual Conference](#), San Antonio

National Black Leadership Initiative on Cancer (NBLIC)

- Sept. 21 - 23 [Health Disparities Conference](#), Houston

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW)/ Texas Annual Conference

- Nov. 6 - 8 [3rd joint conference with NASW/TX and SSWLHC-TX](#), Galveston

