

CHAPTER 155

AN ACT establishing an ovarian cancer public awareness campaign and supplementing Title 26 of the Revised Statutes.

BE IT ENACTED *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:*

C.26:2-184.1 Findings, declarations relative to an ovarian cancer public awareness campaign.

1. The Legislature finds and declares that:

a. Ovarian cancer causes more deaths than any other cancer of the female reproductive system; it ranks fourth as a cause of cancer deaths among women in the United States;

b. In the United States, from 1993 to 1997, the rate of new cases of ovarian cancer was 14.6 and the rate of mortality from ovarian cancer was 7.3 for every 100,000 women; in New Jersey, during the same period, the rate of new cases of ovarian cancer was 16.1 and the rate of mortality was 8.6 for every 100,000 women;

c. When ovarian cancer is found and treated in its earliest stages, the five-year survival rate is 95%; however, most women who suffer from ovarian cancer are not diagnosed until the later stages of the cancer when the disease has spread and the five-year survival rate decreases to 30%;

d. More than half of the deaths from ovarian cancer occur in women between the ages of 55 and 74 years of age and approximately one quarter of ovarian cancer deaths occur in women between 35 and 54 years of age;

e. Because early detection and treatment often mean the difference between life and death, it is important to increase awareness of the factors that put certain women at a higher risk for the disease: increased age; having a personal history of breast cancer or a family history of breast, ovarian, uterine, colon or other gastrointestinal cancers; and bearing no children;

f. The symptoms of ovarian cancer include: general abdominal discomfort or pain, such as gas, indigestion, pressure, swelling, bloating or cramps; nausea, diarrhea, constipation or frequent urination; loss of appetite; feeling of fullness after a light meal; weight gain or loss with no known reason; and abnormal bleeding from the vagina;

g. Because these symptoms are vague and non-specific, women and their physicians often attribute them to more common conditions so that by the time the cancer is diagnosed the tumor has often spread beyond the ovaries; and

h. Although development of a screening test to detect ovarian cancer remains a very active area of research, currently there is no definitive prevention strategy, but having regular pelvic examinations may decrease the overall risk of dying from ovarian cancer.

C.26:2-184.2 Establishment of public awareness campaign.

2. a. The Commissioner of Health and Senior Services shall establish a public awareness campaign to inform the general public about the clinical significance of ovarian cancer and its public health implications. The campaign shall include, at a minimum, risk factors, symptoms, the need for early detection and methods of treatment.

b. The commissioner shall, at a minimum:

(1) provide for the development of printed educational materials and public service announcements in English and Spanish; and

(2) disseminate information for distribution to the public, through a variety of entities, including, but not limited to, local health agencies and clinics, physicians, health care facilities, county offices on aging, pharmacies, libraries, senior citizen centers, other

community-based outreach programs and organizations, and the Department of Health and Senior Services' official website.

3. This act shall take effect immediately.

Approved January 5, 2012.