



News Release

American Academy of Otolaryngology—Head and Neck Surgery
Working for the Best Ear, Nose, and Throat Care

One Prince Street | Alexandria, VA 22314-3357 U.S.A. | www.entnet.org

Contact Information:

Jessica Mikulski
703-519-1549
newsroom@entnet.org

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ENT Doctors Recognizes Oral, Head, and Neck Cancer Awareness Week

Alexandria, Va. – With more than 40,000 Americans diagnosed with cancers of the mouth, head and neck each year, the American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS) supports the Yul Brynner Foundation in promoting the need for education on these conditions during Oral, Head, and Neck Cancer Awareness Week (OHANCAW) 2008.

OHANCAW, held April 21 - 26, is an annual health awareness event designed to alert the public and health professionals of the staggering statistics associated with these very preventable diseases. Nearly 13,000 patients will die from a cancer of the head and neck region and as many as 90 percent of head and neck cancers arise after prolonged exposure to specific factors. Use of tobacco (cigarettes, cigars, chewing tobacco, or snuff) and alcoholic beverages are closely linked with cancers of the mouth, throat, voice box, and tongue. In adults who don't smoke or drink, cancer of the mouth and throat are nearly nonexistent. New research is also just beginning to reveal the link between the common human papillomavirus and cancers of the mouth and throat.

According to the National Cancer Institute, the incidence of cancers of the mouth, head, and neck have remained stable over the past two decades, indicating that many Americans are not aware of how preventable these diseases can be if they make minor modifications to their lifestyles and get screened annually.

Fortunately, most head and neck cancers produce early symptoms. Knowing and recognizing the signs of head and neck cancer can save lives. Symptoms can include: a mouth sore that bleeds easily and doesn't heal; a lump or thickening anywhere in your mouth or neck; soreness or swelling in the mouth that doesn't go away; a red or white patch that doesn't go away; and trouble chewing, swallowing, or moving your tongue or jaw.

During the week-long OHANCAW campaign, free screenings are being offered in communities around the country. To find out the closest free screening site in your area, visit the Yul Brynner Head and Neck Cancer Foundation website at www.ohancaw.com or www.headandneck.org.

For more information on oral, head, and neck cancers and other related ENT health topics, visit www.entnet.org and click "Patients."

About the AAO-HNS

The American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery (www.entnet.org), one of the oldest medical associations in the nation, represents more than 12,000 physicians and allied health professionals who specialize in the diagnosis and treatment of disorders of the ears, nose, throat, and related structures of the head and neck. The Academy serves its members by facilitating the advancement of the science and art of medicine related to otolaryngology and by representing the specialty in governmental and socioeconomic issues. The organization's mission: "Working for the Best Ear, Nose, and Throat Care."

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