COC PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The American College of Surgeons Commission on Cancer (CoC) Standard 1.12 requires an annual report of patient or program outcomes be developed and disseminated by the United Hospital Cancer Committee.

Performance and outcomes data are evaluated annually by United Hospital’s Cancer Committee and the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute leadership team. The data for this report is generated by the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute – United Hospital clinic from Sept. 1 - Dec. 1, 2015.

RADON AND CANCER

The radioactive particles from long term and/or high levels of exposure to radon can damage cells in the lung, leading to lung cancer. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) lists radon as the second leading cause of lung cancer and the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers, estimating it is responsible for about 20,000 lung cancer deaths every year. Identifying radon and mitigating it are two essential steps to protecting our community.

RADON IN HOMES

Testing is the only way to know if a person’s home has elevated radon levels. Indoor radon levels are affected by the soil composition under and around the house, and the ease with which radon enters the house. Homes that are next door to each other can have different indoor radon levels, making a neighbor’s test result a poor predictor of radon risk. In addition, rain or snow, barometric pressure, and other influences can cause radon levels to vary from month to month or day to day, which is why both short- and long-term tests are available.

The EPA recommends taking action to reduce radon in homes that have a radon level at or above 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) of air. According to the MN Department of Health, Indoor Air Unit, two in five homes in Minnesota are at or above 4.0 pCi/L. The EPA has classified 80 percent of MN counties as high radon zones, meaning the average in these counties is at or above 4.0 pCi/L.

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HOW MUCH RADON IS SAFE?

The MN Department of Health advises there is no safe level of radon. Levels should be reduced to as low as reasonably achievable. In many cases it is possible to reduce radon to below 2.0 pCi/L. The table below, from the EPA, estimates a person’s lifetime risk of lung cancer death due to long-term exposure to radon.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Radon (Annual Average) Level</th>
<th>Lung Cancer Risk for People Who Never Smoked</th>
<th>Lung Cancer Risk for People Who Smoke</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20 pCi/L</td>
<td>36 out of 1,000</td>
<td>260 out of 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 pCi/L</td>
<td>18 out of 1,000</td>
<td>150 out of 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 pCi/L</td>
<td>15 out of 1,000</td>
<td>120 out of 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 pCi/L</td>
<td>7 out of 1,000</td>
<td>62 out of 1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 pCi/L</td>
<td>4 out of 1,000</td>
<td>32 out of 1,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Virginia Piper Cancer Institute – United Hospital is proud to partner with the MN Department of Health to provide free radon test kits and educational materials. From Sept. 1 through Dec. 1, 2015, the Virginia Piper Cancer Institute – United Hospital distributed 28 radon test kits and educational materials to patients and their families. Because of the ongoing positive feedback, the clinic will continue to offer this prevention program to any interested patients and staff.

United Hospital Lung Cancer Rates

- Number of lung cancer cases per year: 155 in 2013, 113 in 2014
- Lung cancer percentage of total cancer cases at United Hospital per year: 11.7% in 2013, 8.7% in 2014

Source: MN Department of Health

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

- MN Department of Health: “Radon: Keeping Your Home Safe”

A Cracks in concrete slabs
B Spaces behind brick veneer walls that rest on uncapped hollow-block foundations
C Pores and cracks in concrete blocks
D Floor-wall joints
E Exposed soil, as in a sump or crawl space
F Weeping (drain) tile, if drained to an open sump
G Mortar joints
H Loose fitting pipe penetrations
I Open tops of block walls
J Building materials: brick, concrete, rock
K Well water (not commonly a major source in Minnesota homes)