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PSA Test Remains a Valued Tool to Detect Prostate Cancer Early

Urologists call for careful consultation between patients and physicians

CHICAGO – The American Association of Clinical Urologists (AACU), an organization representing specialists who manage prostate cancer and urologic health, issued the following policy statement today concerning early detection of prostate cancer.

“The American Association of Clinical Urologists (AACU) is concerned that recently published guidelines on screening for prostate cancer could unintentionally leave physicians and the general public with the impression that early detection of prostate cancer is no longer needed. The AACU wishes to express its position on the importance of early detection of prostate cancer and the role of PSA screening.

“Prostate cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in American men. Thus, early detection of prostate cancer is vitally important. Although PSA testing has some limitations as a screening method, it remains a useful tool to help identify prostate cancer in its early stages. Since the introduction of PSA testing and heightened prostate cancer awareness over the past 20 years, there have been significantly fewer advanced prostate cancers at diagnosis and a reduction in deaths attributed to prostate cancer.

“The revised prostate cancer screening guidelines released by the American Urological Association on May 3, 2013, emphasize the importance of continued PSA testing for men between the ages of 55 and 69 and all men at increased risk including African-Americans and those with a family history. For asymptomatic men below age 55 or above age 69 with average risk factors, individualized decisions about the benefits and potential harms of PSA testing need to be discussed between the patient and his physician.

“We have made great progress in national prostate cancer awareness initiatives and in reaching out to men at high risk. The treatment of prostate cancer has improved for all stages, and death from prostate cancer is declining. For many men, early detection is clearly needed, and PSA-based screening is currently the best test available. Physicians and their patients are encouraged to have the discussion to determine whether the test is right for them.”

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