A Cancer Screening’s Only a Phone Call Away

UNM Researcher finds that personalized phone calls may help save lives

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 3, 2014 — Albuquerque, NM (UNM Cancer Center) — Although the field of science keeps advancing, it may be the simple telephone that helps save more lives. Anita Kinney, Professor of Medicine and Associate Director for Population Sciences at the University of New Mexico Cancer Center, and her fellow researchers have found that personalized messages over the phone can better help promote preventive measures against cancer.

Dr. Kinney and her team studied how people reacted when given phone calls based on their personal risk, family history and best practices in health communication. The findings showed that those who received this type of intervention greatly improved their odds of getting a cancer screening, such as a colonoscopy. These screenings are a powerful tool in the fight against cancer, as they help catch cancer at its earliest and most treatable stages.

While cancer screenings are an effective weapon against cancer, they are only useful if people actually get them. This is the issue for those in rural areas because their location makes it harder to access proper healthcare. Dr. Kinney and her team are trying to change that. With her team’s new approach, patients can stay at home, yet still talk to experts who are hundreds, or even thousands of miles away.

This enhanced method of prevention will help states with populations spread over a large area, such as New Mexico. It will provide people with better access to healthcare, which will hopefully improve our odds of beating this terrible disease.

**Paper reference**

“Telehealth Personalized Cancer Risk Communication to Motivate Colonoscopy in Relatives of Patients With Colorectal Cancer: The Family CARE Randomized Controlled Trial” was published in the January 21 edition of the *Journal of Clinical Oncology* ([www.jco.ascopubs.org/](http://www.jco.ascopubs.org/)). Authors include Anita Kinney (UNM Cancer Center), Watcharaporn Boonyasiriwat (Chulalongkom University, Bangkok), Scott T. Walters (School of Public Health, University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth).

**About the UNM Cancer Center**

The UNM Cancer Center is the Official Cancer Center of New Mexico and the only National Cancer Institute-designated Cancer Center in the state. One of just 68 premier NCI-Designated Cancer Centers
nationwide, the UNM Cancer Center is recognized for its scientific excellence, contributions to cancer research, the delivery of high quality, state of the art cancer diagnosis and treatment to all New Mexicans, and its community outreach programs statewide. Annual federal and private funding of over $71 million supports the UNM Cancer Center's research programs. The UNM Cancer Center treats more than 60 percent of the adults and virtually all of the children in New Mexico affected by cancer, from every county in the state. It is home to New Mexico's largest team of board-certified oncology physicians and research scientists, representing every cancer specialty and hailing from prestigious institutions such as M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, Johns Hopkins University, and the Mayo Clinic. Through its partnership with Memorial Medical Center in Las Cruces, the UNM Cancer Center brings world-class cancer care to the southern part of the state; its collaborative clinical programs in Santa Fe and Farmington serve northern New Mexico and it is developing new collaborative programs in Alamogordo and in Roswell/Carlsbad. The UNM Cancer Center also supports several community outreach programs to make cancer screening, diagnosis and treatment available to every New Mexican. Learn more at [www.cancer.unm.edu](http://www.cancer.unm.edu).

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