

**TO MEDIA:**

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**EXCELA HEALTH OPENS LUNG CENTER  
TO SPEED DETECTION, TREATMENT OF CANCER**

**GREENSBURG, PA, August 25, 2011** ... One out of five adults in Pennsylvania smoke regularly, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Health, a statistic that's borne out in Westmoreland County. With tobacco use the leading cause of lung cancer, Excela Health hopes to detect disease in its earliest stages through its new lung center, thereby saving lives.

Excela's lung center offers low-cost screening and appropriate follow-up to people at high risk for lung disease. Individuals at greatest risk are those older than 45 who have smoked for 10 years now or in the past, or have 10 years of significant exposure to asbestos and mining.

Additional risks include:

- A new cough that has not gone away over time
- Cough that produces blood in the sputum
- Dull, aching, or persistent chest pain
- Shortness of breath, wheezing, or hoarseness that is worsening
- Repeated respiratory infections, such as bronchitis or pneumonia

The screening fee is \$150, which includes a comprehensive examination by a certified registered nurse practitioner, a low-dose CT scan, tobacco cessation counseling and a follow-up appointment. Depending on the results, the patient will either be directed to a pulmonologist and surgeon for further treatment, or appropriate preventive care. The screening cost is not presently covered by insurance.

While Excela Health's lung center has been in development for several months, a recent landmark study supports the premise that early screening significantly reduces mortality among heavy smokers.

The National Lung Screening Trial compared X-ray to low-dose CT scanning in detecting cancerous lung tumors early, when they are most treatable. There were 20 percent fewer cancer deaths among the people who underwent the CT screening compared to conventional X-rays, according to results of the study published June 29.

Excela Health thoracic surgeon Lana Schumacher, MD, has long been a proponent of early detection. "Even though we haven't made leaps and bounds in the cure for cancer, we can still make a difference by getting the word out, minimizing risk factors and intervening early on," she said. "Dealing with cancer is a team effort between physicians and their patients.

"The goal of our program is to provide early detection and early treatment, which in turn can greatly affect the prognosis of this aggressive disease," she said.

According to the National Cancer Institute, 68 percent of all cancer cases in Westmoreland County are of the lung or bronchi, for an average of 353 new diagnoses annually.

The best advice Dr. Schumacher can offer the community is to seek immediate medical attention early when they feel they have a problem such as coughing up blood, difficulty swallowing or unexplained weight loss. "The last thing I want to see as a doctor is a patient in the advanced stages of lung or esophageal cancer," she emphasized. "That's a heartbreaker, when the disease is so advanced that nothing can be done to help make a difference for a positive outcome."

To schedule a consultation with the Lung Center, call the Excela Health Call Center, 1-877-771-1234.