

# Applied Cancer Screening Research Branch

## Overview

The Applied Cancer Screening Research Branch (ACSRB) plans, implements, and maintains a comprehensive program of social and behavioral research to promote the appropriate use of effective cancer screening tests, as well as strategies for informed decision-making regarding cancer screening technologies, in both community and clinical practice. Priorities of the ACSRБ are those screening technologies with the strongest evidence bases for reducing cancer morbidity and mortality; however, informed decision-making is an appropriate focus both for screening tests whose efficacy is uncertain and when multiple screening tests exist for a single disease. The branch employs interdisciplinary teamwork and collaboration with relevant organizations and constituencies to establish a national research agenda for cancer screening.

## Advances

For some cancers, screening can help physicians discover cancer early and treat it successfully, saving many lives. Screening tests to detect cancers early may allow patients to receive more effective treatment with fewer side effects. Understanding tests and cancers may assist people to make choices about the risks and benefits of their choices.

Applied Cancer Screening Branch additional areas of interest and activities include:

## Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and Cervical Cancer

Recent release of clinical guidelines recommending the HPV test and quadrivalent vaccine has created new prevention and early detection opportunities for cervical cancer control. National behavioral surveillance systems are currently being expanded to monitor prophylactic vaccine and HPV test uptake as well as Pap test use to understand their combined effect on reducing morbidity and mortality and to evaluate public health interventions. Because excess risk and deaths are concentrated in particular geographic, socioeconomic, and racial and ethnic populations, research is needed at the regional and local level to evaluate progress in reducing disparities.

## Decision-making in Cancer Screening

Cancer screening recommendations have shifted from solely promoting the use of screening tests to promoting informed decisions about whether or not to get screened. An increasing number of controversies over the risks and benefits of cancer screening tests, such as the PSA to detect prostate cancer and mammograms for women in their 40's, have combined with forces such as direct marketing of medical tests to consumers to compel this shift in perspective. As a result, cancer screening intervention research and practice now frequently considers an informed decision – rather than screening uptake – as the outcome of interest. Informed decision-making is an appropriate focus not only for screening methods with important characteristics to weigh, but also for instances where different methods exist for a single disease.

## Team Up

Team Up is a national partnership between the American Cancer Society (ACS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Cancer Institute (NCI), and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and their counterparts in six states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Missouri, South Carolina, and Tennessee. Through a partnership, the program delivers evidence-based approaches to reach women who are rarely or never screened for cervical and breast cancers.

## The Advanced Training Institute on Health Behavior

The Advanced Training Institute on Health Behavior Theory (ATI) offers in-depth instruction on the use, development, and evaluation of health behavior theory. Co-sponsored by the National Cancer Institute and the Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research, the ATI is a 7-day intensive course for new or early career investigators. The focus is on the proper use of theories and on theory testing, rather than on a comprehensive review or evaluation of current theories. The primary objective of the ATI is to allow attendees to extend their knowledge of and experience with the conceptual, methodological, and statistical underpinnings of health behavior theories.

## Priorities

Our portfolio of 64 projects includes research on effectiveness trials, social and behavioral research to promote the use of effective cancer screening tests, and strategies for informed decision-making regarding all cancer screening technologies in both community and clinical practice.

## Applied Cancer Screening's research priorities

- Multidisciplinary social, behavioral and population-based intervention research to increase utilization of effective screening modalities and reduce avoidable cancer morbidity and mortality.
- Development and testing of new, innovative qualitative and quantitative methods and theories appropriate for populations at risk for underuse of cancer screening.
- Exploratory and analytic research investigating and elucidating both the independent and interrelating effects of ecological and individual factors that influence the prevalence of cancer screening and resulting outcomes.
- Research that incorporates new communication technologies, analytic techniques or other innovative approaches to address complex issues surrounding perceptions, acceptance, and use of cancer screening modalities.

## For More Information

ACSRB staff can provide helpful comments and advice regarding the general application and review process. Applicants are encouraged to contact staff prior to submitting an application.

To learn more about the Applied Cancer Screening Research Branch, visit  
<http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/acsrb>

To learn more about funding opportunities, visit  
[http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/funding\\_apply.html](http://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/funding_apply.html)

NIH listserv with weekly funding updates  
<http://grants1.nih.gov/grants/guide/listserv.htm>