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*Queens Cancer Center / American Cancer Society  
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center*

## Five-Year Initiative Will Help Increase Access to Cancer Screenings and Care Among Medically Underserved Communities In Queens

In 2007, the American Cancer Society estimates that in the borough of Queens, 182 people will be diagnosed with cancer each week and 68 people will die from the disease each week. The Queens Library HealthLink initiative was developed to place libraries at the center of an innovative new effort designed to help medically underserved communities throughout Queens access free cancer information, early

detection screenings, cancer treatment resources, and other life-saving services.

This new initiative is a five-year, nearly \$2 million dollar federally funded collaboration among Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center, the American Cancer Society's Queens office, the Queens Library and the Queens Cancer Center of Queens Hospital. The Queens Library HealthLink will:

- Build on the already strong relationships that the Queens Library has within the diverse neighborhoods it serves.

- Include 20 Queens Library community libraries that will join in the effort, serving as outlets for health outreach where they will partner and work closely with other organizations such as community agencies, religious institutions and local businesses.

- Provide links to information and health services through the American Cancer Society and at the Queens Cancer Center.

- Provide specialized staff with expertise in health and community organizing (HealthLink Specialists) to work with neighborhood residents to identify community health priorities and needs.

- Conduct surveys within the 20 participating library neighborhoods throughout the five-year project in order to measure the impact of Queens Library HealthLink programs.

The Queens Library HealthLink services will make available a Queens Health Network mobile cancer screening van that will visit community libraries; supply American Cancer Society educational programming at community libraries; provide free or low-cost cancer screening services through the New York State Healthy Living Partnership and furnish access to cancer treatment at the Queens Cancer Center regardless of ability to pay or immigration status.

"Working together with like-minded agencies is one of the most important ways we can help reach those residents of Queens who most need our assistance. We are proud to be a partner in the Queens Library HealthLink project because it allows us to continue our most important goal of decreasing the burden of cancer throughout the communities in Queens," stated David Golub, Regional Vice President, American Cancer Society's Queens office.

"People in Queens depend on Queens Library for their information needs. We are pleased to be a partner in this important initiative to improve the health and well-being of all our neighbors. As a community, the more we know, the more successful we will be in preventing and treating cancer," said Thomas W. Galante, Director, Queens Library.

“Memorial Sloan Kettering is committed to working together with our partners in Queens to promote cancer prevention and screening for the medically underserved. By building on the accomplishments of our partnership, this project has the potential to sustain access to care in communities where it is most needed,” stated Robert E. Wittes, MD, Physician-in-Chief, [Memorial Hospital](#).

“The Queens Cancer Center of Queens Hospital has established itself as the first cancer center to offer comprehensive care in a public hospital in New York. With our partnership in the Queens Library HealthLink project, we can further educate individuals about the importance of early detection of cancer through our screening program and services,” stated M. Margaret Kemeny, MD, Director, Queens Cancer Center of Queens Hospital and Member of the Board of Advisors for the American Cancer Society Queens Region.

With a population of more than 2.2 million people (U.S. 2000 Census), the borough of Queens is the second most populated borough in New York City and one of the most ethnically diverse counties in the United States. Some 47 percent of the residents in Queens are foreign born, 53 percent of its residents speak a language other than English at home and 27 percent of its residents speak little to no English.

The burden of cancer in Queens continues to remain a vital health issue. Queens has a higher rate of late stage cancer detection compared with the rest of New York State. In all major cancer sites, the Queens Health Network has seen an increased likelihood of late-stage diagnosis and increased rates of mortality. The rate of late-stage detection found at Queens Health Network for [breast cancer](#) is almost three times the national average, and for prostate and [colorectal cancers](#), it is nearly twice the national average.

Queens Library Healthlink is funded through a grant from the [National Cancer Institute](#) of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). According to its mission statement, “the National Cancer Institute coordinates the National Cancer Program, which conducts and supports research, training, health information dissemination, and other programs with respect to the cause, diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of cancer, rehabilitation from cancer, and the continuing care of cancer patients and the families of cancer patients.”

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