

# Ovarian Cancer Demonstration Project: Rhode Island Department of Health



## Ovarian Cancer Facts

Ovarian cancer is the **5th** leading cause of cancer deaths<sup>1</sup> and the **1st** cause of gynecologic cancer death in the US.<sup>2</sup>

### Nationally

- The incidence of ovarian cancer is **9.8 per 100,000** women.<sup>3,4</sup>
- The mortality rate of ovarian cancer is **6.3 per 100,000** women.<sup>3</sup>
- There are approximately **1,218** practicing gynecologic oncologists, approximately **9.3 per million** women, ages 18 and older.<sup>5,6</sup>

### Rhode Island

- The incidence of ovarian cancer is **8.9 per 100,000** women.<sup>3</sup>
- The mortality rate of ovarian cancer is **5.9 per 100,000** women.<sup>3</sup>
- There are approximately **7** practicing gynecologic oncologists, approximately **15.8 per million** women, ages 18 and older.<sup>7</sup>

Treatment by gynecologic oncologists increases overall survival among women with ovarian cancer.<sup>8</sup> To increase survival from ovarian cancer, CDC funded a demonstration project to build evidence for effective strategies. The project focused on strategies designed to increase knowledge and awareness of gynecologic oncologists' role in ovarian cancer treatment and increase the number of women who receive care from a gynecologic oncologist. The Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) was one of three National Comprehensive Cancer Control Program awardees chosen for this project.

### Rhode Island Ovarian Cancer Survivorship Task Force

RIDOH's Comprehensive Cancer Control Program convened the Rhode Island Ovarian Cancer Survivorship Task Force (the Task Force) to guide the selection and implementation of promising approaches

to increase receipt of care by a gynecologic oncologist among women diagnosed with, or suspected to have, ovarian cancer. The Task Force included ovarian cancer survivors, a health educator, a genetic counselor, a nurse, a gynecologic oncologist, and other health care providers from Rhode Island hospitals and universities involved in the care of ovarian cancer patients.

To sustain and build on the activities started during the demonstration project, the Task Force was integrated into the state's cancer coalition, Partnership to Reduce Cancer in Rhode Island.

### Implementation Activities

The Rhode Island team used four approaches across two strategies to increase receipt of care by a gynecologic oncologist among women diagnosed with, or suspected to have, ovarian cancer.

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## Strategy 1: Increasing Knowledge and Awareness of the Role and Importance of Gynecologic Oncologists

### Provider Education



**Identifying Ovarian Cancer Symptoms: Promoting Early Diagnosis, Treatment, and Improved Outcomes Through Rapid Referral Webinar** (<https://cme-learning.brown.edu/RapidOnDemand#overlay-context=RapidOnDemand|group-tabs-node-course-default1>)

#### Description

This 1-hour webinar for health care providers focuses on the importance of early diagnosis of ovarian cancer and shows the benefits of rapid referral to gynecologic oncologists for care and treatment.

#### Partners

- RIDOH
- Rhode Island Ovarian Cancer Survivorship Task Force
- Brown University's Office of Continuing Medical Education

#### Evaluation Methods & Findings

- Conducted a retrospective pre- and post-webinar survey for the live and recorded sessions to assess perceived change in awareness, knowledge, ability, and intention.
- Participants self-reported significant increases in all indicators, including their intention to make rapid referrals to gynecologic oncologists after the webinar\*



**Making a Difference: Expediting Diagnosis of Ovarian Cancer Roundtable Discussion** (<https://cme-learning.brown.edu/DifferenceOnDemand#overlay-context=DifferenceOnDemand|group-tabs-node-course-default1>)

#### Description

This 2-hour roundtable discussion for health care providers began with a survivor's story and included multidisciplinary experts. Panelists discussed symptoms, diagnostic evaluation, physical exams, and the indicators and benefits of referral to a gynecologic oncologist. The roundtable ended with brief presentations of the demonstration projects in Rhode Island, Iowa, and Michigan presented by the respective project teams.

#### Partners

- RIDOH
- Rhode Island Ovarian Cancer Task Force
- Brown University's Office of Continuing Medical Education
- Iowa Department of Public Health
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services

#### Evaluation Methods & Findings

- Conducted a retrospective pre- and post-roundtable survey for the live and recorded sessions to assess perceived changes in awareness, knowledge, ability, and intention.
- Participants self-reported significant increases in all indicators, including a significant increase with relation to change in awareness of the benefits of rapid referral of women with ovarian cancer to gynecologic oncologists.

\* For full results, including data, please see **Action Plan to Increase Receipt of Ovarian Cancer Care from Gynecologic Oncologists** (<https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/ovarian/gynecologic-oncologist/>).

# Ovarian Cancer Demonstration Project: Rhode Island Department of Health



**Rhode Island Ovarian Cancer Resource Tool Kit** [PDF 243KB] (<https://health.ri.gov/publications/toolkits/2020RI-Ovarian-Cancer-Resources.pdf>)

## Description

This tool kit lists resources to empower primary care providers and other health care professionals to recognize the symptoms of ovarian cancer and to expedite the diagnosis and referral process of patients to gynecologic oncologists. It is comprised of epidemiology resources, guidelines and tools for providers, provider education resources, and patient education resources.

## Partners

- RIDOH
- Rhode Island Ovarian Cancer Task Force

## Evaluation Methods & Findings

- Distributed the document to 467 members of the Partnership to Reduce Cancer in Rhode Island.
- Distributed the document to 73 individuals who registered for roundtable.
- Between December 2, 2020 and March 1, 2021, 56 individuals visited the RIDOH web page where tool kit document is located.

## Strategy 2: Expanding and Enhancing the Gynecologic Oncologist Workforce

### Survivors Stories Training Health Care Students



**Implement the Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance's Survivors Teaching Students® Program**

(<https://ocrahope.org/get-involved/survivors-teaching-students/>)

## Description

Developed by the Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance, Survivors Teaching Students® is a curriculum for medical and health care students, such as physicians, physician assistants, nurses, social workers, pharmacists. One-hour workshops involved cancer survivors and caregivers reinforcing clinical information about ovarian cancer and teaching students about women's experiences when they are diagnosed with and being treated for ovarian cancer.

## Partners

- RIDOH
- Rhode Island Ovarian Cancer Task Force
- Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance

## Evaluation Methods & Findings

- Reached 167 students through eight workshops at five Rhode Island colleges and universities.
- Conducted pre- and post- surveys to assess changes in participants' understanding of ovarian cancer.
- Among participants who completed the post-test (n=15):
  - 100% intend to always or often refer a patient diagnosed with ovarian cancer to a gynecologic oncologist.
  - 73.3% are very comfortable in their ability to refer a patient diagnosed with ovarian cancer to a gynecologic oncologist.

# Ovarian Cancer Demonstration Project: Rhode Island Department of Health



## Considerations for Others Seeking to Implement Rhode Island's Strategies for Increasing Receipt of Care by a Gynecologic Oncologist

- **Involve collaborating partners and the affected community members in the planning and implementation of strategies.** RIDOH created an Ovarian Cancer Survivorship Task Force of people with diverse knowledge and expertise, including cancer survivors, caregivers, nurses, advocates, and health care professionals. The Task Force was charged the group with **planning and implementing** the strategies for this demonstration project.

- **Maintain flexibility to be able to overcome challenges.** RIDOH had to transition from in-person to virtual learning for the first time in the middle of the Survivors Teaching Students workshops.

## Additional Resources

- Bright Spot on Collaboration and Partnership: Rhode Island's Ovarian Cancer Survivorship Task Force
- Rhode Island Ovarian Cancer Roundtable: Approach and Lessons Learned

<sup>1</sup> American Cancer Society. About Ovarian Cancer. <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/CRC/PDF/Public/8773.00.pdf>. Last revised January 12, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> American Cancer Society. Key Statistics for Ovarian Cancer. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/ovarian-cancer/about/key-statistics.html>. Last revised January 12, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Cancer Statistics Working Group. U.S. Cancer Statistics Data Visualizations Tool, based on 2020 submission data (1999–2018): U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Cancer Institute; [www.cdc.gov/cancer/dataviz](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dataviz), released in June 2021.

<sup>4</sup> Incidence and death rates are per 100,000 women, all ages, all races/ethnicities.

<sup>5</sup> Foundation for Women's Health. Seek a Specialist. <https://specialist.foundationforwomenscancer.org/>

<sup>6</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate Detailed Tables, Total Population of United States By Age and Sex. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?q=&t=Populations%20and%20People&tid=ACST1Y2019.S0101>

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Census Bureau. 2019 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate Detailed Tables, Total Population of Rhode Island by Age and Sex. Retrieved from <https://data.census.gov/cedsci/table?t=Populations%20and%20People&g=0400000US44&tid=ACST1Y2019.S0101&hidePreview=true>

<sup>8</sup> National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), Committee on the State of the Science in Ovarian Cancer Research; Board on Health Care Services; Institute of Medicine. *Ovarian Cancers: Evolving Paradigms in Research and Care*. National Academies Press (U.S.); 2016.