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KDHE Recognizes September as Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

Ovarian cancer is the eighth most common cancer and the fifth leading cause of cancer death in women in the United States. Ovarian cancer causes more deaths than any other cancer of the female reproductive system. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, in 2005 (the most recent year for which statistics are available), 19,842 women were diagnosed with ovarian cancer, and 14,787 women died from the disease. In the same year in Kansas, 171 cases were diagnosed and 148 women died of ovarian cancer.

Ovarian cancer often causes signs and symptoms including: pain in the pelvic or abdominal area; back pain; being tired all the time; bloating; frequency or urgency of urination; upset stomach or heartburn; or abnormal vaginal discharge, including abnormal bleeding.

“These symptoms may have other causes, but women should consult their health care professional if any of these symptoms worsen or last for two weeks or longer,” said Dr. Jason Eberhart-Phillips, State Health Officer and Director of Health for the Kansas Department of Health and Environment. “When found in its early stages, treatment for ovarian cancer can be very effective.”

It is estimated that more than \$2.2 billion is spent on the treatment of ovarian cancer per year in the U.S. There is no known way to prevent ovarian cancer. But these things may lower a woman’s chance of getting ovarian cancer: having used birth control pills for more than five years; having had a tubal ligation, both ovaries removed, or a hysterectomy; or having given birth.

For Kansas Cancer Information and resources, visit www.cancerkansas.org.

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As the state’s environmental protection and public health agency, KDHE promotes responsible choices to protect the health and environment for all Kansans.

Through education, direct services and the assessment of data and trends, coupled with policy development and enforcement, KDHE will improve health and quality of life. We prevent illness, injuries and foster a safe and sustainable environment for the people of Kansas.