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Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health makes data on cancer screening available on Web

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Graduate students in the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health have made data from the South Georgia Cancer Assessment Project, a pilot survey they completed in 2007, available to the public on the Web at <http://jphcoph.georgiasouthern.edu/csrhi/sqcr.html>. Their goal is to continue the screening assessment, gathering more cancer screening data for counties in South Georgia and making it available online. The pilot study was funded by the Georgia Cancer Coalition.

The student researchers surveyed residents in 5 counties in South Georgia: Bibb, Chatham, Lowndes, Peach, and Terrell. Working under the direction of Gerald Ledlow, associate professor of health services policy and management, they asked respondents whether they had been screened for colon/rectal cancer, breast cancer and prostate cancer. Looking at a variables such as education, income, ethnicity, family history, type of insurance, and census tract, the researchers developed a Web site that will allow anyone access to their results.

"We're providing this information to the regional Georgia Cancer Coalition affiliates, and we want to provide the information to local health providers as we expand the project," said Kelley Chester, a graduate student working on the pilot survey. "The goal is to find the people who don't get screened and encourage them to get screened, which could reduce the cancer mortality rate."

Said Chester, "The earlier you [detect cancer], the better off you are, and the higher chance for survival you'll have."

While the assessment project is currently looking to expand to more counties, the focus is still going to be in South Georgia. "There are more disparities here [than other parts of Georgia]" Chester said. "Terrell County, for example has the highest mortality rate for colon cancer in the state."

In presenting it data, the graduate students of the Jiann-Ping Hsu College of Public Health hope to identify populations who aren't seeking out cancer screening for organizations like the Georgia Cancer Coalition and local healthcare providers of South Georgia.