

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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April is National Oral Cancer Awareness Month

South Burlington, Vermont. It's time again to raise awareness about oral cancer as April is the American Dental Association's National Oral Cancer Awareness Month. The Vermont State Dental Society is using the occasion to raise awareness in Vermont about this type of cancer and how to spot potential symptoms. Oral cancers comprise nearly 3% of all cancers diagnosed in the U.S., and are responsible for 1.6% of all cancer deaths.

What to look for.

We all should be aware of these telltale signs of oral cancer disease, as they may be signs of something more major. You should see your dentist if any of the following signs do not disappear from your mouth or lips after 2 weeks:

- A sore or irritation that doesn't go away
- Red or white patches
- Pain, tenderness or numbness
- A lump, thickening, rough spot, crust or small eroded area
- Difficulty chewing, swallowing, speaking or moving your tongue or jaw
- A change in the way your teeth fit together when you close your mouth
- A sore throat or feeling like something is caught in their throat
- Numbness, hoarseness or a change in voice

What to do.

Similar to other cancers, early diagnoses can have a significant impact on treatment decisions and outcomes. So, routine (every 6 months) visual and tactile examinations by a dentist are recommended, particularly for patients at risk, like those who smoke or are heavy consumers of alcohol.

Dr. Tom Connolly, VSIDS Executive Board President, and an Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeon, stressed that: "There are many Vermonters vulnerable to the tragedy of oral cancer. Every effort should be made to eliminate the co-factors that lead to this such as smoking, alcohol abuse and the use of smokeless tobacco. This in conjunction with regular careful evaluations by dental professionals will significantly reduce the incidence of this disease. "

Learn more at MouthHealthy.org.

About Vermont State Dental Society: The Vermont State Dental Society (VSIDS) is Vermont's professional association for dentists. With just under 400 members, VSIDS includes more than 85% of the practicing dentists in

the state. VSDS works to enhance oral healthcare through providing resources, educational information and support for its members and the public, as well as advocating for public policies and systems to improve oral healthcare for all Vermonters.