

A JOINT STATEMENT FROM AMERICA'S PROSTATE CANCER ADVOCACY,
EDUCATION, AND SUPPORT ORGANIZATIONS

Since 1993, when the PLCO trial was started, we have awaited the results of this trial with eager anticipation, as have others. The initial report of the results of this study -- and those of a comparable European trial -- published last week in the New England Journal of Medicine have told us two things:

1. These studies provide no convincing evidence that mass screening of men over 50 or 55 years of age will lead to a prostate cancer-specific survival benefit within 10 years.
2. The studies offer conflicting evidence about the possibility of a prostate cancer-specific survival benefit associated with the regular use of prostate specific antigen (PSA) testing and digital rectal examination (DRE).

We have come together to make two clear statements about these trials:

1. Above all we thank the patients, the investigators, and the national authorities that funded these two trials for their efforts. The development and implementation of these trials over the past 16 years has been an enormous commitment by all concerned.
2. We enthusiastically support the continued follow-up of patients in the prostate cancer arm of the PLCO study for at least a further 5 years, through 2014, as originally envisaged.

In addition, in the long-term interests of the health of every man in the USA, we wish to state the following:

- Every man, regardless of his age, has the right to know whether he is at risk from prostate cancer, a disease that still kills over 28,600 American men every year, and many more around the world. We encourage all men to be proactive, and to seek out information and support in regard to their health.

- We shall continue to encourage every man to discuss his individual risk for prostate cancer with his doctors, and to request the appropriate use of PSA and DRE tests until better options are available. Further clinical action based on results of these tests is also a matter for serious discussion between each patient and his physicians.
- We call upon the federal government to emphasize the need for more research into early detection technologies and methods that will lead to better and more accurate diagnosis of prostate cancer.
- We call upon the medical research community to place greater emphasis on the development of new clinical tests that can differentiate between those men at greatest need for aggressive prostate cancer treatment and those with indolent forms of the disease who can be well managed without invasive treatment.
- We call upon Congress to increase funding for the Prostate Cancer Research Program at the Department of Defense.
- We call upon the National Institutes of Health to increase funding for prostate cancer research through the National Cancer Institute.