

To the American Head and Neck Society's Cancer Prevention Service:

Head and neck cancer (HNC) represents at least 4% of all cancers in the United States. Recognized behavioral risk factors for HNC include tobacco and alcohol use. HNC disproportionately affects underserved, lower socioeconomic populations, even after adjusting for behavioral confounders. Significant racial disparities also exist, with African Americans having increased incidence and decreased 5-year survival rates when compared to Caucasians.

Previous reports have demonstrated the feasibility of conducting large-scale, community based, free HNC screening events. Beyond their potential for early detection of HNC, such screening events provide an opportunity for participant education. Increased public awareness of HNC risk factors may influence behavioral modification, encouraging for example smoking and alcohol cessation.

Over the past three years, the University of Maryland Department of Otorhinolaryngology has provided oral cancer screenings at the annual B'More Healthy Expo in Baltimore, Maryland. This year, we hope to expand our screening efforts during a separate event on April 13, 2024, to be held at the City View at McCulloh, a mixed income housing and community center in Baltimore City. Baltimore is a majority-minority city, with a substantial underserved and high-risk HNC population. Data from the United States Census Bureau demonstrates that African Americans comprise 61.6% of the population of Baltimore City; furthermore, 20.3% of the population of Baltimore lives in poverty. Thus, a significant population in our local community is at risk for developing HNC, and hence an ideal target for screening.

The screening event will consist of health education, focusing on both signs and symptoms and risk factors concerning for HNC. With the input of survey and health-disparities experts at our institution, participants will be asked to complete a written questionnaire, including items related to demographics, risk factors, suspicious symptoms, motivational factors for attending the screening, method of recruitment, and barriers to access. The questionnaire responses will be reviewed by otolaryngology faculty and residents, followed by a focused history and physical exam. Medical students will also participate in our screening, thus providing a valuable opportunity for medical student education on HNC risk factors. Each participant will be provided a disposition based on screening: urgent or routine otolaryngology follow up with our team, routine follow up with primary care physician, or referral to other specialty such as dental. Behavioral risk reduction strategies will be encouraged throughout the focused screening interaction through verbal communication and patient education handouts.

We anticipate that our screening will identify individuals with concerning history, signs, or symptoms which warrant further otolaryngology evaluation and follow up. When necessary, we will connect these individuals with social work resources and/or insurance assistance programs. Moreover, we intend that our screening will increase participant awareness of HNC, as well as encourage behavioral modifications which may reduce HNC risk, such as smoking and alcohol cessation, while promoting oral care and healthy diet. We are currently collaborating with our hospital's Community Outreach Manager to coordinate this year's inaugural event at City View at McCulloh. New this year, we will be partnering with a behavioral health specialist with expertise in smoking cessation and alcohol use disorder, who herself will be present at our screening event.

Beyond the impact on our local community, we also aim to contribute to the existing knowledge base surrounding free HNC screening events. For those participants granting their permission, we will review their questionnaires, exam findings, and recommended dispositions. Our aim is to better understand which recruitment methods are most effective at attracting high-risk or underserved populations to screening events. We will also evaluate long-term follow up compliance after our screening event by means of a telephone survey for those participants who consent to subsequent contact. This represents a traditionally understudied area with only one previously published study performing similar long-term follow up, and will contribute valuable information in terms of how best to ensure timely evaluation of concerning signs or symptoms identified at the time of screening.

The estimated cost of our project is \$1500. There is currently no other funding specifically allocated to this project, though we are soliciting institutional support to supplement the cost that is not covered by this award. We anticipate using the award to fund printing costs, event promotion, space rental, acquisition of health informational brochures, disposable supplies for patient examinations, and mementos for patient participation. We will additionally provide a smoking cessation brochure from the Maryland Department of Health with the phone number for our state's quit line. In collaboration with our behavioral health specialist, we also seek to purchase nicotine replacement therapies to provide these resources to screening participants and by so doing, hope to further support smoking cessation. We will likewise provide a State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) brochure from the Maryland Department of Aging, recognizing that insurance status is a socioeconomic factor previously shown to affect HNC survival, even after adjusting for other known risk factors.

We believe that providing the service of a free HNC screening event at the City View at McCulloh, a mixed income housing and community center in Baltimore City, sponsored by the University of Maryland Department of Otorhinolaryngology on April 13, 2024, would benefit the health and wellness of our local at-risk community by providing a means of early HNC detection and education, empowering and enhancing both access and knowledge pertaining to HNC risk factors. Furthermore, we believe such an event will also expand on existing knowledge from previous HNC screening events to identify strategies to most effectively recruit higher risk and underserved populations, as well as to ensure timely follow up of concerning signs or symptoms identified at the time of screening. This year, we hope to further encourage behavioral modifications aimed at preventing HNC. To do so, we are partnering with a behavioral health specialist with expertise in this area, and also hope to provide nicotine replacement therapies with funding from this grant. Thank you for considering our screening event for the American Head and Neck Society's Cancer Prevention Community Service Award.