

Blythe Danner Speaks Out About Early Detection And Screening For Head And Neck Cancer

(NAPSA)—Head and neck cancer affects approximately 40,000 Americans each year, and more than half of these patients are diagnosed in the advanced stages of the disease, when survival rates are much lower. Head and neck cancer is expected to be responsible for more than 11,000 deaths this year alone.

Although more individuals are diagnosed with this type of cancer than leukemia, pancreatic or ovarian cancer, few are even aware of this disease. Additionally, many Americans are not familiar with the signs and symptoms or mistake them for something else, which may lead to delayed treatment and more advanced disease.

That is why Emmy-winning actress Blythe Danner is teaming up with the Oral Cancer Foundation with support from Bristol-Myers Squibb and ImClone Systems Incorporated to speak out on behalf of patients and families affected by head and neck cancer and to encourage those at risk to be screened.

In 2002, Blythe lost her husband, director Bruce Paltrow, to oral cancer, so she knows firsthand how this disease affects the individual and his or her family. "When Bruce's voice became increasingly hoarse, we didn't realize this was a sign of head and neck cancer. By the time we spoke to a doctor, his cancer was very advanced," said Blythe Danner. "By telling my story, I hope to empower those at risk by encouraging early detection and screening, and let people know support is available for those with head and neck cancer."

Common symptoms of head and neck cancer:

- Unhealed sore or lump in the head and neck region



Actress Blythe Danner is speaking out about head and neck cancer.

- Sore throat or lingering pain in the mouth
- Trouble or pain when swallowing
- Change in voice quality (hoarseness)
- Ear pain
- Sinuses that are blocked and do not clear.

Adults over the age of 50, especially men, and people who use tobacco or drink excessively are at high risk for developing head and neck cancer; however, younger people and those with no other risk factors are increasingly being diagnosed. Other risk factors associated with head and neck cancer include overexposure to the sun, long-term irritation caused by dentures, poor nutrition, exposure to asbestos or wood dust, and certain viruses.

If you think you or a loved one may be at risk for head and neck cancer, please talk to your health care professional about a screening—it only takes a few minutes. For more information about head and neck cancer, visit www.speakouthnc.com.