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News Release

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Grand Valley Oncology & Grand Valley ENT & Facial Plastic Surgeons to Host FREE Oral Cancer Screenings

Mesa County, CO - In recognition of National Oral Cancer Awareness Month, Community Hospital's Grand Valley Oncology and Grand Valley ENT & Facial Plastic Surgeons will offer free oral cancer screenings on Thursday, April 18 from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. at Mesa County Public Health, 510 29 1/2 Road.

Oral cancer screenings are an effective means of finding cancer at its early, highly curable stages and should be conducted every year. Community Hospital is proud to offer members of the community the opportunity to be proactive with their health by attending the screening on April 18.

Head and neck cancers can be the result of tobacco and alcohol use or through exposure to human papilloma virus (HPV). The rate of oropharyngeal cancers caused by HPV infection is rising in the United States. Approximately 70 percent of cancers in the oropharynx are linked to the HPV virus.

"We know there is an ongoing rise in cases of oral cancer linked to HPV infection in both men and women over the last few years," said Kathryn Tarman, MD, Survivorship Physician at Community Hospital's Grand Valley Oncology. "This trend is expected to continue over the next decade, making screening and vaccinations important tools in cancer prevention," Dr. Tarman added.

Early indicators of oral cancer include difficulty swallowing or movement in the jaw or tongue, numbness in the oral region, a sore throat that does not go away, ear pain that does not go away, a white patch on the tongue or lining of the mouth that does not go away or a lump or thickening which develops in the mouth or on the neck.

To reduce the risk of head and neck cancers, don't use tobacco products, limit alcohol consumption and talk to a health care provider about HPV vaccines. Regular check-ups and annual screenings can help identify cancer in its early stages, when cancer is easier to treat.

"Although head and neck cancers can be devastating in the advanced stages, they can be preventable, and respond favorably to treatment when detected early," said Adam Baker, MD, ENT Physician at Community Hospital. "HPV associated oropharyngeal cancers are the now the most common form of head and neck cancer in the United States, but are preventable with vaccination and are incredibly responsive to chemoradiation therapy," Dr. Baker added.

For more information or to schedule an appointment for the FREE oral cancer screenings, please call Grand Valley Oncology at (970) 644-3180. Walk-ins are welcome.

For more information on head and neck cancer, please visit www.CDC.gov.

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