Increased concern with cancer prevention, spurred on by the recent proliferation of evidence on the causes of human cancer, has led to the creation by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) of a Division of Cancer Prevention and Control. Headed by Dr. Peter Greenwald, this division has assumed the formidable task of translating research findings in human cancer etiology and prevention into action to lower human cancer mortality 50% by the year 2000.

This active and vital program is the culmination of organized efforts toward cancer control extending back to 1913 when a group of surgeons established the forerunner of what is now the American Cancer Society. With increasing momentum, control efforts embraced and implemented the Pap test, mammography, and smoking cessation programs, as well as detection of occupational and environmental hazards. Advances in chemical carcinogenesis and cancer epidemiology have made it clear that much of human cancer risk may depend on dietary and life-style factors (Doll and Peto, J. Natl. Cancer Inst., 66: 1191-1308, 1981).

Greenwald's approach to prevention, formulated with approval of his Board of Scientific Counselors and the NCI's Board and staff leadership, calls for an orderly, phased sequence from carefully chosen targeted intervention programs, paralleling the findings of laboratory, clinical, and population studies, to nationwide application of guidelines and recommendations.

Under Dr. Joseph Cullen, Deputy Director of the division, multiple strategies have been developed to reduce the use of tobacco. These now comprise 60 prevention and cessation trials in over 200 communities in 25 states impacting 10 million people. Using schools, physicians, and dentists as intervenors, as well as the media and self-help, these tobacco control efforts test intervention strategies. Special target groups including youth, women, ethnic minorities, smokeless tobacco users, and heavy smokers are the focus of these trials. Dietary recommendations are currently based on the 1982 NCI-funded report by the National Academy of Sciences, Diet, Nutrition and Cancer, and are consistent with those of a number of scientific groups including the USDA/DHHS Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Chemoprevention trials are in progress to identify specific natural and synthetic substances with the potential of reducing, halting or reversing carcinogenesis. Assistance is being provided to state and local health departments which care for at least 30% of the population, to ensure their participation in cancer control activities. Goals for the future include a nutrition research laboratory to complement and facilitate the intervention trials and the implementation of the guidelines for early detection. The Division of Cancer Prevention and Control has a staff of 210 and a budget of 67.5 million dollars.

Pictured on the cover are Joseph W. Cullen, Deputy Director (top) and Peter Greenwald, Director (bottom). The diagram displays the phased sequence of action from basic research to public service.

Cullen received a Ph.D. in physiological psychology from Florida State University in 1968. Before joining the NCI in 1982 he served as Deputy Director of the UCLA-Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center. Greenwald received his Medical Degree at the State University of New York at Syracuse and a Doctorate of Public Health from the Harvard School of Public Health. He joined the NCI in 1981 after serving as Director of Epidemiology with the New York State Department of Health. Until recently he was Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of the National Cancer Institute.

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