**PNASA Advocacy: Who Are Our Patients and How Can We Help Them Stay Healthy?**

                       By Aura Casabar, BSN, RN

According to the Health Profile 2012 Bexar County Vital Statistics Report , there are 1, 785, 704 people in the county- 59% Hispanics, 30% White Non- Hispanics, 7% African American Non-Hispanic, and 4% other Non- Hispanics  
The population grew 4.1% from 2010 to 2012. Bexar County has a young population with people aged 20-24 topping the chart with 142,213 followed by aged 25-29 at 140,185. Interestingly, there are more boys/men than girls/women from birth until the age of 34 but a switch happened starting age 35 on up where women outnumbered men. I don’t know what happened to those men and where they went.  
I apologize to the OB/Gyn, Labor and Delivery, Neonatal and Pediatric nurses because I skipped those birth/maternal charts. Too many dizzying numbers!  
So let’s go straight to death rates. I noticed more people started dying at age 55 (oh no!) and peaked understandably, at age 85 plus. Women seemed to have outlived the men! But what’s killing all these people?  
The number one leading cause of death in Bexar County as listed in this Health Profile 2012 Report, which to us nurses is not a surprise, is Heart Disease followed by Malignant Neoplasms. We need to have a good grasp of what Heart Disease is, then! Just a thought…maybe we could harness the PNASA TALENT who are experts on Cardiovascular Diseases!!! Any volunteers please???  
But among the latter, it is the malignancy from the trachea, bronchi and the lungs that had the most cases which was an increase as well from 2010 to 2012. This brings to mind the health hazards of smoking! I don’t know how many of these cases smoked but smoking is a killer so please discuss smoking cessation with your love ones and patients.  
Talking about malignancies, I noticed an increase in deaths on malignant neoplasms of colon, rectum and anus from 2011 to 2012. Please nurses let us remind our patients about colonoscopies!!! If they turned 50 yo or especially if they have a first degree relative diagnosed with colorectal cancer, remind them to talk to their GI MDs or PCPs about the procedure!   
The report also showed an increase in the deaths caused by malignant neoplasms of the breasts as well as malignant neoplasms of the cervix, uterus and ovary from 2011 to 2012 .Preventive care is so important! Let us encourage our patients to discuss mammograms and pap smears with their PCPs!   
Where does diabetes fall, you ask? Well, Diabetes Mellitus is 7th leading cause of death by 2012 of Bexar County residents and most diabetics died at age 65-75.  
These are the people we serve PNASA. I came away thinking that we need to spread the value of Preventive Care! It can save lives and is cost effective!! As San Antonio nurses, let’s help San Antonians stay HEALTHY!!!!  
Read the CDC recommendations and be armed with the information!http://www.cdc.gov/…/h…/resources/preventative\_screening.htm  
Sources: http://sanantonio.gov/Health/News/HealthData.aspx Health Profile 2012 San Antonio and Bexar County Health and Demographic Statistics

(PS, If I read any of the data erroneously, please correct me immediately! I would appreciate it!)