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## **Jersey Girl Study Focusing on Pre-teen Girls in Relation to Breast Cancer Development Underway**

*The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Researcher Looks at Environmental, Hormonal and Nutritional Factors*

**New Brunswick, N.J., November 5, 2007** –While we often hear stories about breast cancer and its impact on women - and even on very young women - there is a certain segment of the population that is rarely talked about when it comes to this disease, and that is pre-teen girls.

Research studies have clearly identified puberty as a critical window in a woman's development that has a major impact on her future risk of developing breast cancer. Women getting their first period before age 11 have three times the risk of developing the disease. At the same time, girls in the United States have been developing earlier.

That is why Elisa Bandera, M.D., an epidemiologist at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ) and assistant professor of epidemiology at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, is conducting "The Jersey Girl Study," which aims to understand how puberty is affected by environmental, hormonal and nutritional factors in New Jersey girls. Dr. Bandera is collaborating with scientists at the Environmental and Occupational Health Sciences Institute (a joint program of Rutgers and UMDNJ-RWJMS), Robert Wood Johnson Medical School's Department of Pediatric Endocrinology, UMDNJ's School of Public Health, and the New Jersey Family Medicine Research Network.

Bandera's team is currently recruiting girls from pediatric practices in Princeton, West Windsor, Flemington, and Somerset. Between 100 and 150 girls, aged 9 and 10 will participate.

Once eligibility is determined, data is collected on environmental exposures, lifestyle factors (including diet and physical activity), and medical history. Body measurements (including weight, height and body fat) and puberty scale are recorded, and urine and saliva samples are collected.

Bandera notes, "Understanding what causes early onset of puberty in New Jersey girls is crucial to improving their health as well as reducing their long-term risk of developing breast cancer." "Despite what most people think", she adds, "fewer than 10% of breast cancer cases are attributed to genetic factors. At the same time, there is growing evidence that early life factors have a significant impact in breast cancer risk." Breast cancer accounts for approximately 26% of all female cancer diagnosis. In 2007, 6,080 new cases and 1,350 deaths due to breast cancer are expected in New Jersey.

More information on the Jersey Girl Study can be found by e-mailing [jerseygirlstudy@umdnj.edu](mailto:jerseygirlstudy@umdnj.edu) or calling 732-235-9860.

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### **About The Cancer Institute of New Jersey**

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is the state's first and only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center, and is dedicated to improving the prevention, detection, treatment and care of patients with cancer. CINJ's physician-scientists engage in translational research, transforming their laboratory discoveries into clinical practice quite literally bringing research to life. The Cancer Institute of New Jersey is a center of excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. To support CINJ, please call the Cancer Institute of New Jersey Foundation at 1-888-333-CINJ.

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey Network is comprised of hospitals throughout the state and provides a mechanism to rapidly disseminate important discoveries into the community. Partner Hospitals: Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, Atlantic Health (Morristown Memorial Hospital and Overlook Hospital). Affiliate Hospitals: Bayshore Community Hospital, CentraState Healthcare System, Cooper University Hospital\*, Jersey Shore University Medical Center, JFK Medical Center, Raritan Bay Medical Center, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital at Hamilton (CINJ-Hamilton), Saint Peter's University Hospital, Somerset Medical Center, Southern Ocean County Hospital, The University Hospital/UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School\*, and University Medical Center at Princeton. \*Academic Affiliate

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