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National Oral Cancer Awareness Survey Reveals 83 Percent of Adults Want to be Screened for Oral Cancer During Routine Check-ups; Only 37 Percent Actually Are

Consumer Survey Conducted by Vigilant Biosciences, in Collaboration with Head and Neck Cancer Alliance, and Support for People with Oral and Head and Neck Cancer, Reveals Greater Need for Oral Cancer Screening, Education and Prevention Among U.S. Adults

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. – April 5, 2016 – A recent national consumer survey revealed that among U.S. adults, the majority knows very little or nothing at all about oral cancer (58 percent) and only 37 percent reported being screened for oral cancer at their last dental check-up, according to a [survey](#) released today by [Vigilant Biosciences, Inc.](#), a leading innovator and developer of solutions that aid in the early detection and intervention of cancer, in collaboration with the [Head and Neck Cancer Alliance](#), and [Support for People with Oral and Head and Neck Cancer](#) (SPOHNC).

The online survey polled 523 U.S. consumers ages 35-75 on their knowledge and preferences around oral cancer and oral cancer screening. The findings were released today in support of [Oral, Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Month](#), which occurs in April and [Oral, Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Week](#)[®], which occurs April 10 – 16, 2016.

The survey found that the majority of consumers (86 percent) want to learn more about how to reduce their risk for oral cancer and are interested in simple screening tools, used in the dental office or at home, that test for early indicators of oral cancer and provide information on increased or decreased chance of developing oral cancer.

“Oral, head and neck cancer – particularly HPV-related oral cancer – is increasing at an alarming rate and many people are not diagnosed until the cancer has progressed to a later stage,” said Holly Boykin, Executive Director at Head and Neck Cancer Alliance. “Early diagnosis is significant to the successful treatment of these cancers, and by working together with other industry organizations, as well as private companies like Vigilant Biosciences, we can improve patients’ lives through early detection and a commitment to engage in conversations about risk factors.”

“The diagnosis of head and neck cancer can be overwhelming,” said Mary Ann Caputo, Executive Director of Support for People with Oral and Head and Neck Cancer. “Patients diagnosed with this disease can find support, hope and encouragement through SPOHNC’s many resources and programs specifically designed for this patient population. Any steps to raise awareness of oral, head and neck cancer will help to increase the survival rate and quality of life from earlier intervention. National Oral, Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Month is a great time to begin this dialog.”

Key findings of the survey are below. An executive summary of the survey and an infographic can be found at vigilantbiosciences.com.

Screening for Oral, Head and Neck Cancer

While just over a third of those surveyed recall being screened for oral cancer at their last dental check-up, a large majority would like to be screened at every check-up and would like their dental professional to use simple screening tools to assess their risk. Among notable findings:

- Only 37 percent reported being screened for oral cancer at their last dental check-up.
- 83 percent of respondents would like to be screened for oral cancer at every dental check-up.
- 85 percent would like the option to be screened for oral cancer with a simple rinse and spit test that would assess early risk factors specifically associated with oral cancer, and provide information on increased or decreased risk for developing oral cancer. A number of those would be willing to pay \$25 or more for this screening.

Risk Factors for Oral, Head and Neck Cancer

Tobacco use and alcohol consumption are behaviors associated with the highest risk for developing oral cancer. Another risk factor includes exposure to certain types of HPV (human papillomavirus), especially HPV-16. While the majority of survey respondents recognized tobacco use as a leading risk factor for oral, head and neck cancer, many did not know that exposure to HPV was also a risk factor:

- Only 23 percent recall talking to their dental professional about oral cancer risks at their last dental check-up.
- 65 percent of respondents were unaware that HPV is a risk factor for oral cancer.
- More than 86 percent want their dental professional to help them learn ways to reduce their risk of developing oral cancer.

Consumers also underestimated the death rate for oral cancer. Only 17 percent of those surveyed were aware that 40 percent of people diagnosed with oral cancer die within five years, with most believing the five-year survival rate to be higher.

“This year’s survey found that there is still much work to be done around increasing awareness of oral cancer and oral cancer risk,” said Matthew H.J. Kim, Founder, Chairman, and CEO of Vigilant Biosciences. “Hundreds of thousands continue to be diagnosed with late-stage oral cancer every year, but we can work together to impact those numbers by educating consumers

on the risks and providing clinicians with simple, accurate and cost-effective tests that can help detect oral cancer before it is too late.”

About Oral, Head and Neck Cancer

There are more than [600,000 new cases of oral cancer each year worldwide](#). According to the [American Cancer Society](#), close to 48,330 individuals in the United States will be diagnosed with oral or oropharyngeal cancer this year with 9,570 deaths resulting from this disease. Historically the death rate associated with this cancer is particularly high due to late-stage diagnosis and intervention. Currently, the vast majority of patients are detected through a visual exam and/or are symptomatic, at which point they are likely late stage. As a result, oral cancer often goes undetected to the point of metastasizing. Early diagnosis of oral cancer results in a cure rate of up to 90 percent.

About the Head and Neck Cancer Alliance

The Head and Neck Cancer Alliance (HNCA) is the premier non-profit organization dedicated to saving lives and improving the quality of life for existing patients via an organized and strategic alliance of all stakeholders. The united and collaborative efforts focus on prevention; early detection; advocacy; patient services; awareness; education and research.

About SPOHNC

The mission of SPOHNC (Support for People with Oral and Head and Neck Cancer) is to raise awareness and meet the needs of oral, head, and neck cancer patients through its resources and publications. As the only nonprofit organization of its kind in the U.S., SPOHNC is focused on programs of support for patients and their families. As such it can have an enormous positive impact on meeting the psychosocial needs of patients as well as preserving, restoring and promoting physical and emotional health. SPOHNC's programs of support include 125+ chapters throughout the U.S., a National Survivor Volunteer Network where patients can be matched with survivors, "News From SPOHNC," a monthly newsletter, two Recipe and Resource Guide cookbooks, the second edition of *We Have Walked In Your Shoes, A Guide to Living with Oral, Head, and Neck Cancer*, and additional resources which may be helpful in one's journey with this disease. Learn more about SPOHNC at www.spohnc.org or by contacting SPOHNC at 1-800-377-0928.

About Vigilant Biosciences, Inc.

Vigilant Biosciences is a leading innovator and developer of solutions that aid in the early detection and intervention of cancer. Vigilant's OncAlert™ Oral Cancer product line includes rapid and lab-based products that are simple, accurate and cost-effective, and empower healthcare practitioners to improve lives through earlier intervention. The OncAlert Oral Cancer product line is not yet available for sale in the U.S. For more information, visit www.vigilantbiosciences.com.