



**Program Goal:** To create a head and neck cancer awareness campaign in the Central New York (CNY) area through adult, student, and medical staff education programs as well as the creation of an art fundraiser using donated head and neck cancer patient radiation masks.

**Program Summary:** Education is the cornerstone to the prevention of cancer in our society. Head and neck cancer has seen an alarming increase in cases – especially those linked to the Human papillomavirus (HPV). Upstate has been instrumental in the care and prognosis of head and neck patients in CNY and a team of interested personnel, patients, and volunteers have developed a creative way to educate the community on the disease.

Patients afflicted with head and neck cancer go through a combination of intense radiation therapy, chemotherapy and/or surgery. In order to administer the radiation each patient must be fitted with a polymer mesh mask that conforms to their head and neck. Once the treatments are finished the mask is either given to the patient or, in most cases, destroyed. In other parts of the country these spent masks have become canvases for unique and creative art and subsequently opportunities for education.

We propose to create a similar campaign in CNY with three key elements: education programs in the local school districts, creation of the mask art work with the help of the same school districts as well as the art community, and an art auction of the masks after completion. The monies from the art auction will be used to create a patient fund and to support future ongoing education and fundraising efforts.

### **Education**

**Goal:** To educate high school students on the causes, risk factors, treatments, and statistics related to Head and Neck Cancer.

**Summary:** A team of certified nurses and Upstate staff members, in conjunction with our Master of Public Health students, will work with the Health Department at each school to schedule presentations in the classroom. Included is a lesson plan outline which is intended to be delivered in a single class period and can be delivered to multiple classes as needed. A small portion of time will be devoted to the explanation of the awareness/outreach and art component of the project at that time.

## Awareness/Outreach through Art

**Goal:** To engage high school art students, teachers, and community in the creation of art pieces using radiation masks as canvases.

**Summary:** The canvases of the radiation masks make for a unique display of what patients might experience during their treatment. Students will be allowed to take creative license in the creation of these pieces through their art classes or other possible outlets for their art. The collection of these masks will run through the beginning of 2016 so schools will have the opportunity to involve several students during the process. The masks will then be considered for our first auction in order to raise funds for patients of Head and Neck Cancer.

## Auction

**Goal:** To use the art pieces created by the community as center pieces for an art auction with the intent to establish a fund for Head and Neck Cancer patients and their families.

**Summary:** In April of 2016 our first mask auction will take place in the new Upstate Cancer Center. Masks submitted for consideration will be chosen by a judging panel to be included in the art auction. Select pieces will be displayed in various community centers prior to the auction. This will be a sponsored event from the help of several vendors with all proceeds going to the patient fund.

## Video Component

**Goal:** Video documentation of the project including lectures at local schools, transformation of the blank masks to works of art, patient and survivor interviews, and medical expert interviews.

**Summary:** When you look at a project such as this you see many layers. It is about the patients and their experience; the education of our youth on how to make life choices that will help to prevent such an awful disease; taking something that is plain, cold, and representative of emotional and physical struggle and turning them into magnificent works of art; the science behind it all; and the effects this all has on the community. We want to be able to tell all of those story lines simultaneously in our video.

We are looking for willing volunteers to document each of the pieces listed above and coordinate as well as collaborate with the Upstate Cancer Center to develop a documentary on our project. The production of a 15 to 30 minute (approx.) documentary, as well as a condensed 3-5 minute inspirational version, will be used both as a promotional tool and as an art piece itself. We hope to work on this project and have it completed by January 2016 in anticipation of our April 2016 auction which co-insides with Head and Neck Cancer Awareness Month. Consideration is being given to debuting the film at the 2016 Spring Syracuse International Film Festival prior to the auction. We are open to ideas on production, content, and format.

# *beneath the surFACE*

## Curriculum Outline

- I. Introduction
  - a. Students will be directed to close their eyes and then will listen to the description of the life cycle of a patient with Head and Neck cancer. During that time radiation masks will be placed in front of the room so when they open their eyes they are looking at each other. The masks will stay up during the Epidemiology and Clinical portion of the presentation.
- II. Epidemiology
  - a. Causes: Smoking, Alcohol, HPV infection  
[http://www.thelancetconferences.com/hpv-and-cancer/presentations/chaturvedi\\_presentation.pdf](http://www.thelancetconferences.com/hpv-and-cancer/presentations/chaturvedi_presentation.pdf)
  - b. Risk factors: Oral sex, tobacco use, excessive alcohol use
  - c. Population: Younger population has HPV positive tumors, affects white males/female most often
  - d. Rate increases: Projected to exceed incidence of cervical cancer by 2020 (that is not far away!)
    - i. All signs point to increasing incidence
    - ii. >50% of oropharyngeal cancers in the US are HPV related  
<http://www.medscape.com/viewarticle/812665>
  - e. Screening:
    - i. There is no oral screening for HPV – abnormal cells must be present to detect the virus (eg. pap smears)
    - ii. Dental providers palpate and assess oral cavity
  - f. Graphics : projection of incidence graph, population graph, HPV status graph
- III. Clinical
  - a. Treatments – chemotherapy, radiation, surgery or most often a combination of treatments
  - b. Side effects
    - i. Physical – oral mucositis, radiation burn, disfigurement, dry mouth, speech impairment/loss, fatigue, nausea, feeding tube, hearing loss
    - ii. Emotional – fear, sadness, anxiety, depression, suicide risk
    - iii. Social – job loss, financial hardship, poor communication, public aversion, transportation issues

- c. Gardasil
  - i. Benefits – protection from 4 most high risk HPV strains (cervical and oropharyngeal)
  - ii. Risks- minor reactions include nausea, dizziness, pain at injection site, similar to most vaccines, serious reactions are very rare
  - iii. Barriers – stigma, perceived cost, 3 shots required, misinformation
  - iv. CDC recommendations – for boys ages 11-21 and girl ages 11-26 (<http://www.cdc.gov/std/HPV/STDFact-HPV.htm>)
- IV. Transition
  - a. Students will again close their eyes and listen to an overview of the project and the conversion of “something that is plain, cold, and representative of emotional and physical struggle and turn it into magnificent works of art”. When they open their eyes the plain masks will be changed to examples of masks converted to art.
- V. Project – beneath the surFACE

### **Timeline:**

August/September 2014: Development of education program and structure of mask creation

August to December 2014: Contact local schools through letter campaign and school visits to garner support for program in their school

November 2014: Upstate Medical University MPH Program Presentation and Recruitment

November 2014: Sponsorship sheet developed with Marketing and the Upstate Foundation; Letter sent to potential sponsors

December 2014 to April 2015: Documentary development and shooting

January 2015 to June 2015: Round 1 of Education Series and Mask Development – Upstate staff and MPH students to deliver presentations in local schools while art programs develop masks

September 2015 to December 2015: Round 2 of Education Series and Mask Development

September 2015 to December 2015: Local artist distribution of masks

January 2016 – Documentary completed

January 2016 – All Masks Due; Judging panel to decide on masks to move on to auction

January 2016 to March 2016 – Rotating display of select masks in the CNY community to bolster support for the art auction

April 2016 – Documentary debut at Syracuse International Spring Film Festival

April/May 2016 – Art Auction at the Cancer Center

Ongoing: Sponsorship development, Art Auction Committee Development, Art Auction Planning