Cancer study to track 500,000

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Clark, the society’s regional vice president in North Texas.

The society’s first demographic study found a strong association between tobacco use and lung cancer. The second study, which began in the 1980s, showed a link between larger waist sizes and increased death rates from cancer.

Study participants must fill out periodic questionnaires about their diet, exercise, vitamin consumption, health screenings and other behavioral choices as well as acknowledge any medical problems.

They also have their height, weight, blood pressure, heart rate and waist circumference measured and give an initial blood sample.

“Studies like this will help us understand cancer and what drives this disease at an environmental level,” said Dr. Gilberto Jimenez-Justiniano, a Dallas oncologist.

Enrollment in the latest study will be from 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Saturday at the cancer society’s offices at 8900 John W. Carpenter Freeway or State Highway 183, between Regal Row and Mockingbird Lane in Dallas, and at 3301 West Freeway in Fort Worth.

Participants also may schedule an appointment for a future screening by calling 1-888-604-5888 or can register online at sceuthere.com/cps3enroll/dfwtx.

About 250 North Texans already have been selected for the study. However, despite numerous appeals since 2009, the local cancer society was unable to attract a sufficient number of minority participants to meet a local study quota of 400 people.

“We want to make sure we get a strong representation from all ethnic groups,” Clark said. “If there are any trends in these populations, we want to track them.”

She and other society leaders partnered with top Dallas officials in a Thursday morning news conference, hoping to draw more participants into the study.

Tennell Atkins, the city’s deputy mayor pro tem, made his own heartfelt plea for the research effort.

“Cancer touches almost everyone’s family,” he told a small gathering at City Hall. “My son got cancer a couple years ago.”

Later, Atkins explained that his son, Tyler Atkins, was diagnosed two years ago with liver cancer that had spread to his breast. After extensive treatment, the disease remains in remission.

“It’s kind of shocking when you have cancer and you’re only 33 years old,” Tennell Atkins said. “My son’s got three sons of his own and a whole life to live.”