

David A. Paterson, Governor
Richard F. Daines, M.D., Commissioner

**GOVERNOR PATERSON DESIGNATES MAY
OSTEOPOROSIS PREVENTION MONTH IN NEW YORK STATE**

**State Health Commissioner Urges New Yorkers
'Take Steps to Protect Bone Health'**

Albany, N.Y. (May 11, 2009) – Governor David A. Paterson has designated May as Osteoporosis Prevention Month in New York State to remind all New Yorkers to protect their bone health. Nearly three million New Yorkers over age 50 have osteoporosis or are at significant risk of developing osteoporosis. May is also National Osteoporosis Prevention Month.

“Maintaining strong bones should be a lifetime commitment,” said State Health Commissioner Richard F. Daines, M.D. “Prevention through diet and exercise, along with early diagnosis and treatment can reduce the prevalence and debilitating affects of this disease.”

Osteoporosis is a disease that causes bones to become thin and weak. This “silent disease” progresses without symptoms until a fracture occurs. If left untreated, osteoporosis can lead to debilitating pain, reduced mobility and a loss of quality of life. In 2006, more than 75,000 New Yorkers were hospitalized for falls, many of whom suffered bone fractures related to osteoporosis.

“An astonishing number of adults who break a bone -- as many as 95 percent -- are being treated without being evaluated for osteoporosis,” said Commissioner Daines. “Too often, people believe that once they have osteoporosis or a fracture, there is nothing they can do to protect their bones. But there are steps everyone can take at any age to help prevent and treat osteoporosis.”

The following steps are recommended to protect bone health:

- Maintain a balanced diet rich in calcium and vitamin D.
- Engage in regular physical activity, including weight-bearing exercise.
- Avoid smoking and excessive alcohol consumption.
- Have a bone mineral density test. Consult with your health care provider as to when and how often.

- Take osteoporosis medications as prescribed by your health care provider.

Nationally, nearly one in two women of Caucasian or Asian/Pacific Island descent, one in four women of African-American, Hispanic/Latina or American Indian/Alaskan Native descent, and one in four men over 50 years of age will have an osteoporosis-related fracture during their lifetime. It is projected that by the year 2020, the number of New Yorkers with either osteoporosis or low bone mass will increase by 25 percent to more than 3.7 million people.

Each year, the New York State Department of Health provides funding to support New York State Osteoporosis Prevention and Education Programs. These not-for-profit organizations and hospitals conduct outreach campaigns, provide education and information, and training and support to the general public and health professionals about the disease.

More information about osteoporosis and the location of the nearest Osteoporosis Prevention and Education center is available at: www.NYSOPEP.org

Information on osteoporosis is also available on the State Health Department's Web site at: <http://www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/conditions/osteoporosis/>