Lung cancer rate drops
State falls behind Kentucky in cases of men with lung cancer

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Louisiana men no longer have the nation's highest lung cancer rates — not because health has improved, but because researchers have more information.

Kentucky now leads the country in lung cancer among white men, and Delaware has the highest incidence in black men, according to a report released Tuesday.

Louisiana now ranks No. 2 for white men and No. 5 for black men out of the 19 states studied, said Vivien W. Chen, the New Orleans epidemiologist who is the editor of "Cancer in North America, 1991-1995."

Chen, who has overseen the annual publication of such five-year studies since 1988, said new information makes her wonder whether Louisiana ever really was at the top.

Delaware had reported cancer statistics before, Chen said, but had not ranked so high in this category. Because Chen's study merely examines the numbers, not the reasons behind them, she could not explain why Delaware moved up.

Lung cancer accounted for 28 percent of all cancer deaths in the five years studied.

Louisiana men are still above the national average in cases of this disease: 32 percent higher than the national norm for white men and 18 percent above the national rate for black men, the survey shows.

Figures from Kentucky and Wisconsin had not been available because their registries had not met standards of the North American Association of Central Cancer Registries, which released the report at its annual meeting in Chicago.

To be eligible, a registry must collect statistics for five years, cover at least 90 percent of its area and establish procedures for weeding out faulty and duplicate information, said Chen, director of the Louisiana Tumor Registry at Louisiana State University Medical Center.

Findings of a new report on cancer in North America:

- Cancer incidence was 41 percent higher for men than for women.
- Among men, the rate was 21 percent higher among black men than white men.
- Among women, the rate is 6 percent higher for white women than for black women.
- Prostate, lung and colorectal cancers are the most common among men.
- Breast, lung and colorectal cancers are the most prevalent in women.
- Urinary cancer is more common in white men than black men.
- Ovarian cancer is more common among white women than black women.
- The most common strains among children are leukemias, cancers of the central nervous system and lymphomas.

SOURCE: The Associated Press