



Genesee County Health Department

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PRESS RELEASE

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Re: National Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death from cancer among women in Michigan. In 2006, 331 women in Genesee County were diagnosed with Breast Cancer. The American Cancer Society estimates 40,170 women in the U.S. will die from breast cancer during 2009. Early detection enables early treatment and increases the chances of survival.

Breast cancer is an abnormal growth of tissue in one or both breasts. Usually breast cancer develops in the milk producing areas of the breast known as the ducts or lobules.

All women are at risk for developing breast cancer; however, there are several risk factors that can increase the risk. These risk factors include:

- Increasing age-women 50 years of age and older are at an increased risk
- Family history of breast cancer in a mother, sister, daughter or other multiple relatives
- Personal history of breast cancer
- Never giving birth or having a first child after the age of 30
- Menstruating before 12 years of age or stopping menstruation after 55 years of age

Other possible risk factors include obesity, low physical activity, alcohol consumption and long term use of hormonal replacement therapy.

Mammography is one of the best tools available to detect breast cancer early. Yearly mammograms are recommended beginning at age 40. Clinical breast exams are also recommended once a year starting at age 20 along with monthly self breast exams.

The Genesee County Health Department's Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) offers free clinical breast exams, mammograms, pelvic exams and Pap smears to women who qualify. The program may also assist with diagnostic services if an abnormality is found. Medicaid may be provided to assist with treatment when a woman currently enrolled in the BCCCP is diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer through the program.

The BCCCP program is available for women within age requirements that are uninsured, underinsured and income qualified. For example, a one person household with an income of \$27,075.00 is income qualified. It is not county restricted and does accept the Genesee Health Plan and those on Medicare part A only. For more information or to see if you qualify for this life saving screening, please contact the Genesee County Health Department at 810-237-4545.