

Breast Cancer Awareness

Early Detection Of Breast Cancer Saves Lives ®

(NAPSA)—Significant progress in mammography technology continues to help physicians diagnose breast cancer in its earlier stages. When coupled with new treatment options, early diagnosis through mammography screening can significantly improve a woman's chances of survival. That's good news because in the United States more than 200,000 new cases of invasive breast cancer are diagnosed each year.

Mammography screening is the single most effective method of early detection. That's why an annual mammogram is recommended for women over 40. A clinical breast examination by a health care professional should also be done on a regular basis. Additionally, women can take charge of their own breast health by understanding their personal risks of the disease, performing a breast self-exam every month and reporting any breast change promptly to their health care provider.

Unfortunately, studies have indicated that a significant number of women over 40 years of age fail to get a mammogram, and of those who do, many never follow up with a second mammogram. Women cite a number of reasons for their nonparticipation, including lack of finances and lack of time. It is important that women know that there are resources available to help address these issues. For example, throughout the year, low-cost or free mammography screening

is available to many women who are over 40 and underinsured or uninsured. Additionally, many mammography centers offer extended hours and some even provide child care for moms having mammograms.

In an effort to encourage women to have an annual mammography screening, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM) sponsors recommend making every day National Mammography Day. Whether it means scheduling an appointment on a 40th birthday, or if it means reminding a friend to make an appointment, every step counts.

For information on low- or no-cost mammography screening, contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at (888) 842-6355 or visit their Web site at www.cdc.gov. Women seeking mammograms at a reduced rate are urged to make their appointment early in the year, as space may be limited. To find a breast-imaging facility, contact the National Cancer Institute at (800) 4-CANCER. For more information, visit www.nbcam.org.

Finally, NBCAM sponsors encourage people to continue to raise awareness of the importance of early detection of breast cancer. NBCAM's Web site provides resources for: promoting breast cancer awareness; alerting others that early detection saves lives; and reminding them to schedule a mammogram. For more information, visit www.nbcam.org.