

National Breast Cancer Awareness Month Message Is Simple Yet Powerful: "Early Detection Saves Lives"

(NAPSA)—For 20 years, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM) has been educating women about breast cancer detection, diagnosis and treatment. This year, NBCAM once again is reaching out to women with important messages.

"Early detection saves lives," is a mantra with which many have become familiar over the past 20 years. This is based on the concept that the sooner breast cancer is detected, the less likely a woman will need highly invasive and uncomfortable treatments, and the more likely she will survive the disease.

In the United States, one out of seven women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime. Thankfully, significant progress in mammography technology is helping physicians to diagnose the disease earlier and new treatment options mean more comfortable treatments and improved outcomes. Today, there are more than two million breast cancer survivors in the United States.

Mammography screening is the single most effective method of early detection. Therefore, an annual mammogram is recommended for women over 40 years of age. Women also should know how their breasts normally feel and report any breast change promptly to their health care provider. Women can take charge of their breast health by performing a

breast self-exam every month.

Special populations at risk for breast cancer include minority and older women. African American women have a higher breast cancer death rate than women of any other racial or ethnic population. Many women over the age of 60 feel that screening for breast cancer is not necessary and that they are less at risk than when they were younger. On the contrary, women over 60 are more at risk, not less, for breast cancer.

In an effort to encourage women to have an annual mammography screening, the third Friday in October each year is National Mammography Day. On this day, or throughout the month, many radiologists provide discounted or free screening mammograms. To find a facility participating in National Mammography Day, contact the National Cancer Institute at 1-800-4-CANCER. Additionally, throughout the year, low cost or free mammography screening is available to women who are over 40 and underinsured or uninsured. For more information, contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at 1-888-842-6355 or visit their website at <http://www.cdc.gov/>.

For further information about the NBCAM campaign, visit www.nbcam.org or contact Susan Nathanson, National Coordinator at 312-596-3557.