



20 Years of Screening Women and Saving Lives

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP)

(<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp>) is celebrating twenty years of providing access to free or low cost mammograms and Pap tests to under-insured and uninsured women. Early detection of these cancers can save lives.

Mammograms, an X-ray of the breasts, can find breast cancer early, before it is big enough to feel or cause symptoms and when it is easier to treat. All women aged 50 to 74 should have a mammogram every two years and those between 40 and 50 years should talk with their doctor about when to start screening.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in the United States, and is the second leading cause of cancer deaths among women. One of every eight women will get breast cancer in her lifetime and the risk of cancer increases with age.

Established under the Breast and Cervical Cancer Mortality Prevention Act of 1990, the program launched in four states and screened 244 women for breast cancer during its first year. By 1997, the NBCCEDP had achieved nationwide coverage funding 50 states, the District of Columbia, five territories, and 13 tribes or tribal organizations. Since its inception, the NBCCEDP has served more than 3.7 million women and provided more than 9.2

million breast and cervical cancer screening examinations, diagnosed more than 44,885 breast cancers, 2,554 invasive cervical cancers, and 123,563 pre-malignant cervical lesions. In addition to providing direct screening and diagnostic services, the NBCCEDP promotes public and professional education and supports patient case management. These program components are becoming increasingly important as more women become eligible for healthcare but are unaware or unable to navigate the healthcare system.

Over the years, the NBCCEDP has successfully made changes to improve the program's structure and level of service for women in need. For example, the Breast and Cervical Cancer Prevention and Treatment Act of 2000 allowed states to offer women diagnosed with cancer through the NBCCEDP access to treatment through a special Medicaid option. All 50 states and the District of Columbia have since approved this option.

To receive NBCCEDP screenings and other services, federal guidelines require a woman to be under-insured or uninsured, and at or below 250 percent of the federal poverty level (e.g. a family of 4 at \$22,050). They must also be between the ages of 40 and 64 for breast cancer screening, and 18 and 64 for cervical cancer screening services. An estimated 8 to 11 percent of women throughout the U.S. are eligible to receive services. To find out if you qualify for free or low-cost mammograms and Pap tests, contact your local program by visiting <http://apps.nccd.cdc.gov/cancercontacts/nbccedp/contacts.asp> or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.