



MICHIGAN

Cancer Screening of Underserved Women in Southeast Michigan

While rates of cervical cancer in the United States and Michigan have fallen significantly since the introduction of the Pap test, as many as 70% of women who die from cervical cancer either never had a Pap test or did not have one in the 5 years before getting cancer. Many women who get cervical cancer are older, are members of minority groups, and are unlikely to have regular health care. Women who are less likely to have had a Pap test in the previous 3 years include women with low incomes and less than a high school education, or those aged 18–29 years or aged 72 or older.*

Pap tests are important because cervical cancer may not cause symptoms. Regular Pap tests with follow-up when needed can prevent most cervical cancers.

The University of Michigan Health System (UMHS), a member of the Michigan Cancer Consortium, started the Pap Test Screening 2011 program with many internal and external partners. On March 26, 2011, from 1:00–4:00 PM, 12 rooms at the UMHS clinic were used to perform a Pap test every 15 minutes. Twelve doctors volunteered to perform the tests and Cancer AnswerLine nurses booked the appointments. Women who were at least 21 years old, had not had a Pap test in the previous 2 years, and did not have medical coverage for a Pap test were eligible to participate.

The event cost only about \$1,300, most of which was associated with printing flyers, producing mailings, and providing lunch for volunteers. Supplies, lab costs, doctor time, and pathology reports were donated.

That day, 103 women were screened. Most were aged 25–59 years, with a majority being in their 40s and 50s. About half of the women were members of racial or ethnic minorities, primarily

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*Michigan Department of Community Health. (2011). Estimates for Risk Factors and Health Indicators State of Michigan: Selected Tables: Michigan Behavioral Risk Factor Survey 2010. Available at http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/2010_MiBRFS_Standard_Tables_FINAL_350512_7.pdf.

African-American. UMHS Interpreter Services provided interpreters for two Spanish-speaking and two Chinese-speaking participants.



All women were given a list of local resources for free or low-cost health care, and health information including smoking cessation literature. Later, each woman received a letter with her test results. Seven women had abnormal results, and were contacted by a doctor or social worker for follow-up.

Sponsors learned several valuable lessons from the event. Scheduling the screening in a warmer month drew more registrants compared to the previous screening held in late January. Scheduling the event in the afternoon worked well, and efficiency was improved by having more clinic rooms available. However, a larger, earlier media push would have increased awareness and filled available appointments, and more Spanish-language health education materials were needed.

This successful model was repeated, thanks to funds from Verizon to carry out five Pap test screening days from the fall of 2011 to the fall of 2012.

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