



Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

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Do it for Yourself, Do it for Your Family

Among Michigan women, breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths and is the most frequently diagnosed cancer. Early detection is the key to survival. With regular screening, breast cancer is more likely to be detected at an earlier stage, when it is most treatable. The five-year survival rate among women whose breast cancer has not spread beyond the breast at the time of diagnosis is 98.6%.

No one should die from cervical cancer. Experts believe that virtually all cervical cancer deaths could potentially be prevented by a combination of safe sex practices, routine Pap tests, and appropriate follow-up of abnormal screening results. Cervical cancer can be detected early by regular Pap tests; the "Pap test" is a specific test for cervical cancer and is not necessarily the same as a pelvic exam. Most cervical cancers develop over a relatively long period of time. During this time, abnormal tissue can be detected easily by a Pap test, and then removed by a health care provider.

Routine screening is the most important factor in cervical and breast cancer diagnosis. The Dickinson-Iron District Health offers un-insured or under-insured Michigan women age 40-64 years cancer screening through the Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program (BCCCP). This program provides low-income women with access to life-saving cancer screening services.

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In the event of a diagnosis of breast or cervical cancer through the BCCCP, a woman may be eligible for Medicaid coverage. If eligible, Medicaid will pay for all of the medical expenses for as long as treatment for cancer is required. Once treatment is no longer needed, the woman is then potentially eligible (once again, based upon age and income) for continued annual screening services through the BCCCP.

Many women are surprised at how high the income guidelines are for the BCCCP program," said Barbara Peterson, Program Coordinator. "They think Health Department programs are only for people with severe financial needs." Peterson said the guidelines are based on family size. For example, a woman with a family of four can have an income up to \$57,625 and qualify for BCCCP. The program includes a clinical breast exam, Pap test, and mammogram.

"These programs are very important for our BCCCP clients," said Peterson. "Often, the annual exam they receive at the Health Department is the only visit they make to a health care provider." Through this program, women who have breast and cervical cancer will be identified at earlier stages of these diseases, when treatment is less expensive and the survival rate is more favorable.

Peterson stated, "Preventing and identifying disease early is what we are all about. We say, 'Do it for yourself, do it for your family.'

For more information or an appointment, call the Dickinson-Iron District Health Department at 779-7237 or 265-4166.

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