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### ***Cancer Services Program of Niagara County Helps Women***

**Over 7 million women age 50-74 in the U.S. have not been screened for breast cancer.** Breast cancer, the most common cancer among adult women in the U.S., is the 2<sup>nd</sup> leading cause of death for women. One in every eight women will get breast cancer in her lifetime. The rate of cancer increases with age. In 2006, the most up-to-date statistics, over 190,000 women were diagnosed with breast cancer and more than 41,000 died from the disease.

Breast cancer does not discriminate based on age or race. However, minority women are more likely to have advanced breast cancer when it is discovered. African American women are most likely to die from it. The risk of getting breast cancer is increased if a close family member (mother, grandmother, sister) has had it. This is why it is important to know your family medical history.

Starting at age 40 women should have a yearly mammogram. If the woman has a family history, she should speak to her doctor about starting screening before age 40. Having a mammogram, an x-ray of the breast, is the best way to find cancer. Mammography finds breast cancer early, before it is big enough to feel or cause any symptoms. Finding cancer early is essential in making treatment easier.

In 2008, one of five adult women 50-74 had never had a mammogram or was not up-to-date with screening, according to a Center for Disease Control report. Unfortunately, the rate of mammography screening has not improved since 2002. Reasons for not getting a mammogram vary. The number one reason women do not get screened is because their health care provider did not advise them to do so. Some women are not aware of the benefits of screening or do not believe there are benefits. Women without health insurance are not seeking screening because they cannot afford to pay for it.

For women without health insurance, the New York State Department of Health Cancer Services Program can help. Each county in New York State has a Cancer Services Program that offers free mammograms to women age 40-64 who have no health insurance. Through this program, women can also get free clinical breast examinations, pap tests and colorectal cancer screening at participating doctor offices.

**To find out about the Cancer Services Program of Niagara County please call 278-8285.**

**PUBLIC HEALTH: PREVENT. PROMOTE. PROTECT.**