

The Right to Know About Breast Cancer Screening

Public Health Issue

Breast cancer is the most frequently diagnosed cancer in American women and the second leading cause of cancer death. The American Cancer Society estimated that in 2011, more than 15,000 women in Florida would be diagnosed with breast cancer, and nearly 2,700 would die from the disease. Higher survival rates are attributed to early and regular breast cancer screenings, as well as improvements in medical treatment options. Yet studies* show that many women living with disabilities are less likely than women without disabilities to receive mammograms within the timeframe recommended by current guidelines. This represents a significant public health concern as nearly 1 in 5 women in Florida are living with at least one disability.

Program Overview

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed *The Right To Know* promotional campaign for women living with disabilities to increase breast cancer awareness and encourage regular screening. In 2007, the Florida Office on Disability and Health (FODH) introduced the campaign throughout the state in partnership with the Centers for Independent Living, Florida Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, Susan G. Komen for the Cure, among others. Campaign materials are written in both English and Spanish, and include posters, digital audio files, fliers, advertisements, and tip sheets. FODH added materials geared to health care providers, Haitian Creole speakers, and women living with sensory, cognitive and intellectual disabilities. The materials have reached thousands of women with disabilities through a variety of media and live events:

- Approximately 475 mammography facilities
- More than 140 media outlets, including newspapers, public access television, radio stations and a statewide webinar
- Ten disability expositions with more than 8,000 attendees

Making a Difference

More than half of women with disabilities who were surveyed reported that the campaign helped prepare them for a mammogram and provided new information about breast cancer, mammograms, and special accommodations to request for their screening exam. After reviewing *The Right to Know* materials, women reported a new understanding of the importance of regular mammograms, and feeling more confident and prepared for the screening exam. This change in attitude will likely improve adherence to recommended screening.

"The Right To Know information empowered me to take care of my health and encourage other women with disabilities to do the same."

"The Right To Know materials had questions to ask my health care provider that I never thought to ask before. Your information on breast cancer and the importance of regular screenings will be very helpful to a lot of people."

- Reflections from Florida women with disabilities

Shaping Tomorrow

FODH is working with the Florida Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (FBCCEDP) to ensure sustainability of the campaign. They will host the campaign materials on their website and continue to promote the campaign through their regional offices. We encourage organizations to access these free materials on our website: www.rrtk.phhp.ufl.edu or the FBCCEDP website: www.doh.state.fl.us/Family/cancer/bcc/index.html.

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* Courtney-Long E, Armour B, Frammartino B, Miller J, "[Factors Associated with Self-Reported Mammography Use for Women with and Women without a Disability.](#)" [!\[\]\(f60b7a900783ac3fd531bfd9c111be6d_img.jpg\) Journal of Women's Health. 2011; 20:1279-1286.](#)

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