

Clinical UpdateCompliments of
John Muir Health

Physician News

SERVICE LINE SPOTLIGHT:

Breast Health Services:

'Every Woman Counts' Program Emphasizes the Underserved

This month, JMHPN focuses on a program within our Breast Health Services known as Every Woman Counts, (EWC), aimed at making sure every woman in our community has access to needed breast health services.

The mission of EWC is to save lives by preventing and reducing the devastating effects of cancer for Californians through education, early detection, diagnosis and treatment, and integrated preventive services, with special emphasis on treating the underserved.

At the clinics in Concord, patients receive culturally appropriate education and information on early detection, breast self-exams, clinical breast exams, screening, and diagnostic mammography. Ultrasound and same-day core breast biopsy are also provided if appropriate. Interpreters are available at every clinic and transportation can also be arranged.

Providing culturally sensitive, seamless quality breast health services for screening and diagnosis on the same day requires the collaboration and resources of multiple system departments, specifically medical imaging, and dedicated breast health services staff. Additional partners in these efforts include the American Cancer Society, Association Hispana del Cancer, the Cancer Support Community, Contra Costa Health Services, and La Clinica. Following a diagnosis of breast cancer, community physician specialists provide comprehensive surgical, medical and radiation oncology care. These concerted efforts decrease barriers for women, prevent loss to follow-up, diagnose cancer as early as possible and ensure timely treatment.

Those who qualify for free services may include those who are 40 years old or older; have low income; have no or limited insurance; are not getting these services through Medi-Cal or another government-sponsored program; and live in California.

To round out the picture of how the program works, *JMHPN* spoke with Deborah Kerlin, MD, Medical Director of Breast Health Services, Shellie Campos, Nurse Practitioner in Breast Health Services, and Brenda Carlson, Executive Director, Oncology.

JMHPN: Tell us more about the EWC program.

Shellie Campos, NP: John Muir Health Cancer Institute's Breast Center at Concord has had a successful cancer screening and diagnostic program through

EWC since 1997. Our unique program allows patients to complete their clinical breast exam, screening and/or diagnostic imaging, breast ultrasound, and ultrasound guided core biopsy on the same day. If a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer, we provide Nurse Navigation services and enrollment in the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Program (BCCTP) for treatment and continuity of care.

We continue to be the primary provider of the EWC program in Contra Costa County and are noted as a "Model Program" by the State of California.

Why is EWC so important to you?

Dr. Kerlin: The most important reason is that breast cancer has truly become an epidemic. In our community, it affects one in seven women. In 10-15 years, it is estimated that it will affect one in four. The earlier we detect cancer, the more likely we can cure it. Unfortunately, many underserved women lack access to care - due to having no insurance, or other reasons. EWC allows that population -- especially in their 40s-60s, when we usually detect breast cancer -- to get screening. Once the patient is diagnosed, it also puts support services in place and allows them to access treatment.

This program is a bright spot in my work. The women are so appreciative of being able to have this screening. They are often so frightened when they come in, and so relieved afterwards when they learn that they don't have breast cancer. Not only that, but they know they can come back for screening in the future.

Of what are you most proud?

Brenda Carlson: I am proud to be part of an organization that embraces and supports programs such as EWC that ensure all individuals in the communities we serve have access to appropriate screening and care. I am also very proud of the dedicated staff that are part of this program - their compassionate care continues to have a tremendous impact in the lives of the many women seen in these clinics.

Shellie Campos, NP: We are most proud of providing comprehensive care to all patients in our community. Quality and personalized care is a priority and we truly work as a team with our community physicians and clinics to help the underinsured and uninsured. In 2014, we screened 393 patients and enrolled 11 in BCCTP for cancer treatment. The PCPs, radiologists,

surgeons, medical oncologists, and radiation oncologists are all important parts of the team and it is a pleasure to help patients navigate through this process.

What do you wish other MDs knew about your department?

Dr. Kerlin: Breast cancer is the leading cause of death, next to lung cancer. I'm not sure most physicians recognize its growing incidence. Twenty years ago, when I started practice, it was one in 19. It is projected to become one in four. One reason is that women are living longer, but there are still a lot of unknowns as to why this increase is happening. Earlier detection and the ability to get screening will decrease our mortality rates. With the great new modalities for screening that we have, we are detecting breast cancer earlier. Breast MRI, for instance, is amazing.

The PCPs are doing a great job in screening and detecting breast cancer, being very thorough. I would emphasize that if they see patients who have financial constraints, they have a resource in EWC, and can send patients for screening.

Also, I would ask physicians to be sensitive to listening to patients who practice self breast exam and have noticed a minor change in their breasts. It could be significant. You might order an ultrasound.

Shellie Campos, NP: We wish more MDs were aware of the EWC program for their patients who are low income, uninsured, or underinsured. As a Nurse Practitioner/Nurse Navigator, I can help guide their patients through the system, assist with community services, provide education, and be their patient advocate.



Deborah Kerlin, MD, being interviewed for an upcoming "Clinical Minute" to be posted to the Physician Resource Center.

Do you have any patient stories you'd like to share?

Shellie Campos, NP: Here are some patient perspectives: "It was shocking to discover a mass in my left breast on a morning after exercise class. I never considered I would ever have to deal with this alone. The Every Woman Counts Program was absolutely essential to my situation. The devoted and caring staff helped me navigate the process and provided me with answers to my questions. The diagnostic mammogram, ultrasound, and core needle biopsy were all done in one day... and the staff took immediate action in developing a custom care plan. I was enrolled in the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Program and referred to a specialist. If the program didn't exist I think I would have panicked and stopped moving forward.

I am so grateful for the support, confidence, education, referrals and guidance that I received... my life was at stake and I didn't lose precious time thanks to the expedited services and treatment."

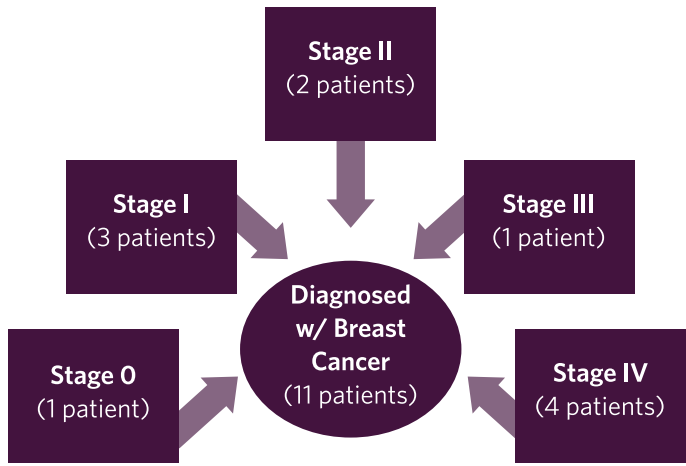
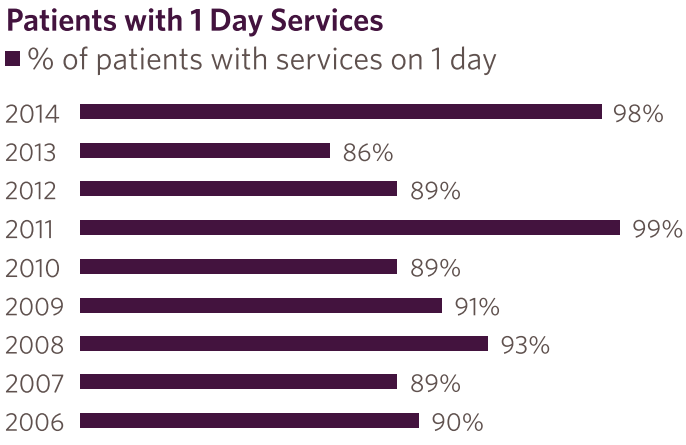
"I have been without medical coverage and being able to have these tests gives me peace of mind with everything else I am dealing with. The staff is wonderful and the Nurse Practitioner is fantastic and a real blessing."

"To be able to come here and get the most excellent care, I can't thank you enough."

"The Program is invaluable... the staff is very kind, knowledgeable, and enthusiastic. At no time are you ever made to feel inferior because of your current circumstances."

Every Woman Counts is a "one stop shop" for most breast cancer screening and services. Depending on the individual patient, services include:

- Breast Exams
- Ultrasounds
- Diagnostic Mammograms
- Biopsy



See more at: <http://www.johnmuirhealth.com/about-john-muir-health/community-commitment/community-health-alliance/our-programs/adults/everywoman-counts.html#sthash.CwOwV3Vb.dpuf>