



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

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Breast Cancer Death Rates Declining in Wisconsin, But More Screening Needed

October 17th is National Mammography Day

State officials mark National Mammography Day by reporting that breast cancer incidence and mortality rates in Wisconsin are declining, but some women are still not getting screened.

“The need for effective and early screening is still very important,” said Secretary Karen Timberlake. “All women, especially those age 40 and older, should contact their health care provider to discuss a schedule for mammograms and other breast cancer screening.”

The Secretary noted that between 2000 and 2004, the breast cancer mortality rate among Wisconsin women overall decreased by an average of 2.3 percent annually. Still, some 770 Wisconsin women died from breast cancer in 2004, making it second only to lung cancer as a leading cause of cancer death among women in the state.

Breast cancer is detectable at an early stage by mammograms, and many more lives can be saved by taking advantage of regular screening. This is especially critical for those women in populations with higher mortality for breast cancer, a cancer that can be effectively treated if detected early. The national five-year survival rate for women diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer is 98 percent. In 2000-2004, 62 percent of breast cancer in Wisconsin was detected early.

Timberlake said the Wisconsin Well Woman Program provides mammograms to women age 45-64 with little or no health insurance coverage. “This state program is available in all 72 counties and 11 tribal areas,” Timberlake said.

The American Cancer Society recommends annual mammograms for women beginning at age 40, and earlier for those women at higher risk (such as those with a family history or genetic predisposition for breast cancer). According to the 2006 Behavioral Risk Factor Survey, 20 percent of Wisconsin women aged 40 and older did not have a mammogram within the past two years.

For more information:

- *Wisconsin Cancer Incidence and Mortality, 2000-2004*
<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/wcrs/pubs.htm>
Also available at this site is an American Cancer Society report, *Wisconsin Cancer Facts & Figures 2007*, which contains breast cancer screening recommendations.
- Wisconsin Well Woman Program
<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/womenshealth/WWWP/index.htm>

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