



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Partner assistance allows ADPH to continue serving women at high risk of breast and cervical cancer

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Thanks to the generosity of the Joy to Life Foundation and the Susan G. Komen for the Cure, North Central Alabama Affiliate, the Alabama Department of Public Health can continue to fund the screening of high-risk women for breast and cervical cancer through June 30.

In the past seven months the Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program has served 10,000 women, the number of women ordinarily served during an entire year. All program appropriations have been depleted because of this unprecedented demand for services. To avoid completely suspending the program, the two nonprofit organizations have stepped forward to provide funding for screening high-risk women.

“We are very appreciative of the donation of private funds by the Joy to Life Foundation and the Susan G. Komen for the Cure, North Alabama Affiliate,” said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer. “We would have been forced to suspend services were it not for their donations that will carry the program through the next five months. Last year alone more than 150 medically underserved women were diagnosed with breast and cervical cancer through this program, and more than 1,700 women have been diagnosed since this program began in 1996.”

Early detection of these cancers saves lives. Breast cancer screening services include clinical breast examinations and mammograms. Cervical cancer screening services include pelvic exams and Pap smears. If an abnormality is detected, diagnostic testing for both cancers may include an ultrasound, biopsy or colposcopy.

To be eligible for screening, the individual must be female, have an income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level, and have no insurance or be underinsured. In addition, the patient must be age 40-64 and have an abnormal clinical breast exam, or age 50-64 and never had a mammogram in her lifetime, or have not had a Pap smear in the past five years

Funding for screening services is provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, State of Alabama, and the National Breast Cancer Foundation. Aside from provision of new funds, Joy to Life and Komen have been providing funding for mammograms to women under 50 years of age for several years.

Program services are provided by more than 400 contracted physicians, surgeons, radiologists and facilities across the state committed to providing services to underserved women. These providers agree to accept a reduced rate for their services, they also agree to submit required data regarding services they provide for submission to the CDC.

In addition to the Joy to Life Foundation and Susan G. Komen for the Cure, North Alabama Affiliate, other partners include the American Cancer Society, Deep South Network, REACH US/ REACH 2010 Coalition, the University of Alabama at Birmingham's Comprehensive Cancer Center, the University of South Alabama Mitchell Cancer Institute, Southeast Alabama Regional Medical Center, Avon Foundation's Butterfly Project, and many others.

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