

# 2021 NPCR DELAWARE SUCCESS STORY

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## Addressing the Breast Cancer Burden in Delaware through Partnerships

### National Program of Cancer Registries SUCCESS STORY

#### SUMMARY

Breast cancer continues to be the most common cancer diagnosed among Delaware women, followed by lung cancer. Female breast cancer is the second most common cause of cancer death among females in the United States and Delaware. Over the last ten years in Delaware, breast cancer incidence increased, and breast cancer mortality decreased. These observed trends could be due to improvements in early detection and screening efforts placed in Delaware. According to the *2013-2017 Incidence and Mortality Report*, from 2003-2007 to 2013-2017, Delaware's breast cancer incidence rate increased by 8% compared to the overall US increase of 3% [1]. The proportion of breast cancer cases diagnosed in the earliest and most treatable stage has greatly improved in Delaware over the past three decades by working across multiple cancer programs.

#### CHALLENGE

Early detection is essential to decrease the mortality rate of breast cancer. Factors such as lifestyle, environmental, and non-modifiable risks or a combination of these can contribute to the development of the disease, all which makes it difficult to pinpoint the major contributing factor. Some women who develop breast cancer have no apparent risk factors other than their gender and age.

In 2013-2017, 4,203 female breast cancer cases (30% of all female cancers) were diagnosed in Delaware. Non-Hispanic White persons accounted for 75% of female breast cancer cases [1]. According to the 2018 Behavior Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS), in Delaware, the percentage of non-Hispanic White females 40 years of age and older who reported having a mammogram in the last two years was slightly lower compared to non-Hispanic African American females. Delaware females 40 years of age and older in the three highest income categories had the highest percentage of mammogram, 83% for females with an annual income of \$50,000 to \$74,999, and 83% for females with an annual income over \$75,000. Additionally, higher education levels were associated with increased prevalence of having a mammogram in the past two years. Delaware females 40 years or older who hold a college degree have a higher prevalence of mammogram of 87% compared to Delaware females with less than a high school diploma at 65.9%[1].

Although cancer screening has increased overall, further improvements may benefit women with lower income and education. Therefore, it is important to reach those communities to continue increasing screening to reduce mortality by making screening accessible to all Delawarean women regardless of financial hardships or education levels.

#### SOLUTION

Delaware implemented evidence-based interventions to increase cancer screening awareness to the people who are at increased risk. These interventions targeted populations in zip codes with a higher incidence of late-stage breast cancer cases. Some of these solutions include cost reduction programs such as Screening for Life to reduce financial burden. It also includes Patient Navigation portals, screening reminder calls or mail, community-based cancer screening campaigns, community outreach at churches or hair salons, and digital media.

The Division of Public Health's (DPH) Screening for Life Program (SFL) provides preventive breast cancer screenings and/or diagnostic procedures at no cost to eligible enrolled women. Those enrolled in the program have no out-of-pocket expenses. A Reduced Out-of-Pocket Expenses program is in place for communities with people of increased risk for cancer such as women with lower income and lower education. Eligibility for the program is determined by risk factors and guidelines based on age, timeframes for preventive breast cancer screenings, income eligibility, and insurance status. Even if individuals have health insurance, they are eligible for SFL benefits if their insurance does not cover preventive screening, and if their deductible is 15% more than their income.

The goal of patient-based navigation is to eliminate any barriers the patient faces while obtaining a screening, such as financial hardships or transportation. Patients are also referred to other services such as cancer treatment and tobacco cessation programs. Utilizing data from the Delaware Cancer Registry, target zip codes with a higher incidence of late-stage breast cancer cases are identified. This is an all-in-one service where patients can enroll in the SFL and receive referrals to Delaware's Cancer Treatment Program, which assists patients with the cost for cancer treatment.

Providers helped increase breast cancer screening by successfully using patient reminder cards. Providers use both electronic health records and monthly mailed breast cancer screening reminder cards to remind patients of upcoming medical appointments more efficiently. There is also promotion for preventative breast cancer screenings in high-risk demographics that include Black and White women that may pool women from lower income and education levels.

Reaching these populations through people in their communities is an effective way to increase screening. DPH has representation at community outreach events and partners with mobile health clinics to inform the importance of preventative breast screening efforts in targeted zip codes. To ensure that communities and partners are well informed on how to outreach, an informational presentation is available that community-based organizations can distribute to their members and clients. Patients are also notified of additional programs if cost is a factor.

Marketing campaigns are in place to provide this information right into the community. There are ongoing partnerships with hair salons and screening events at churches in targeted zip code locations with a higher incidence of late-stage cases.

#### RESULTS

Data from the 2018 BRFSS provides information on breast cancer screening among Delaware females. Of Delaware females 40 years of age and older, 79% reported having a mammogram within the previous two years, compared to a national median of 72%. This percentage shows that increased screening efforts have paved the way to increased mammogram testing.

According to the 2013-2017 Incidence and Mortality Report, incidence rates for breast cancer increased 10% in non-Hispanic White females (2003-2007 rate: 125.5 per 100,000; 2013-2017 rate: 137.6 per 100,000). Incidence rates for breast cancer increased 3% in non-Hispanic African American females (2003-2007 rate: 133.1 per 100,000; 2013-2017 rate: 137.7 per 100,000). Additionally, in 2013-2017 68% female breast cancers diagnosed at the local stage; 25% at the regional stage; 6% at the distant stage; while 2% had an unknown stage [1].

The results of marketing campaign efforts are nationally recognized, such as the campaign Sister to Sister, that highlights the importance of breast cancer screening to people who are at increased risk for cancer. The tactics include partnerships and screening events at churches, which in their own community members are there to outreach to their community and collaborating with mobile health vans to educate the population of breast cancer risk. Hair salons, who have diverse audiences consisting of African American and White women in targeted zip codes, are receptive to receiving SFL preventative cancer screening materials and sharing them with their patrons. This holistic approach meets individuals in a non-clinical setting.

Digital media is produced to reach a wider range of audience for cancer screening efforts. Digital media in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole are created to communicate to individuals in their native language. Digital preventative breast screening ads and commercials virtually educate and

engage individuals. The Delaware Breast Cancer Coalition (DBCC) and SFL partnership helps tailor marketing campaigns to targeted demographics that are highly impacted by breast cancer diagnosis and mortality. Brochures, flyers, and social media posts about preventative breast cancer screening services were shared with provider offices and are housed on the Healthy Delaware website [1].

African American women and White women were identified as having higher rates of breast cancer mortality and lower income and education levels. Programs like Screening for Life that assist with and outreach to communities can help to increase screening and these efforts may be reflected in future Incidence and Mortality reports produced by the Delaware Division of Public Health.

#### SUSTAINING SUCCESS

Delaware is committed to sustaining the partnerships and collaborations established with multiple agencies, committees, facilities, programs and their engagement with the public. It is a priority to continue to increase breast cancer screening and early disease detection considering the pandemic. By doing so, the Delaware Division of Public Health will continue efforts to reduce the breast cancer burden in Delaware and continue to produce and implement evidence-based interventions to people who are at increased risk for cancer statewide by using the Delaware Cancer Registry data as a source in planning efforts.

#### REGISTRY CONTACT INFORMATION

855-386-6149

<https://dhss.delaware.gov/dph/dcr/home.html>

#### REFERENCE LIST

[1] Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Public Health, Comprehensive Cancer Control Program. CANCER INCIDENCE AND MORTALITY IN DELAWARE, 2013-2017. 2021.



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention