

## News Releases

# DHEC News Release: DHEC increasing access to breast and cervical cancer screenings

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 28, 2013

## DHEC increasing access to breast and cervical cancer screenings

COLUMBIA, S.C. - An additional \$1 million in funding from the state means more South Carolina women will soon have access to breast and cervical cancer screenings through the Best Chance Network, the S.C. Department of Health and Environmental Control announced today.

"We are excited to have the opportunity to serve 3,500 more uninsured, low-income women this year thanks to additional funding from the state," said Virginie Daguise, Ph.D. of DHEC's Best Chance Network (BCN). "A combination of funding from the state and the federal Centers for Disease Control means we now will be able to provide breast and cervical cancer screenings to more than 10,000 women across our state who would otherwise not have access to these lifesaving services."

The BCN program offers breast and cervical cancer screenings at no cost to women who have no health insurance, are between the ages of 47 and 64, and who meet certain income guidelines. DHEC partners with the South-Atlantic Division of the American Cancer Society and more than 250 health care providers in every county of the state to coordinate cancer screenings for these underserved women.

"There have been so many women helped by the Best Chance Network to assist them in gaining access to Pap smears and mammograms that they otherwise would not have been able to afford," said Sheree Nwanagwo, M.D., a BCN provider partner and physician with CareSouth Carolina in Bennettsville. "There have been abnormalities and even cancers that were detected that would not have been if not for this very important screening network."

Each year an estimated 3,580 women in the state will be diagnosed with breast cancer alone; 660 of them will lose their lives to the disease. Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women, no matter their race or ethnicity. It remains the second most common cause of death from cancer among women in S.C. and nationwide.

By providing access to early detection and treatment services, the Best Chance Network aims to help more South Carolina women win their battle against cancer. Since its inception in 1991, BCN has provided breast and cervical cancer screenings to more than 96,000 uninsured, low-income women in the state.

For more information on the Best Chance Network, visit:

[www.scdhec.gov/Health/DiseasesandConditions/Cancer/FreeCancerScreenings/](http://www.scdhec.gov/Health/DiseasesandConditions/Cancer/FreeCancerScreenings/)

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