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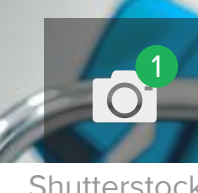
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NEWSLETTERS



Free mammograms offered to women under 40 in Pittsburgh

A Glimmer of Hope, AHN and the Pittsburgh Pirates join to offer breast cancer screenings

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Although insurance companies often start providing coverage for breast cancer screenings at age 40, about 5% of cases of breast cancer occur in women under the age of 40.



The Pittsburgh-based breast cancer organization [A Glimmer of Hope Foundation](#), in collaboration with Allegheny Health Network and the Pittsburgh Pirates, is offering breast cancer screenings at no charge to women under 40 who either have no insurance or have been denied coverage through their insurance provider.



Under standard insurance guidelines for preventative care, women under 40 without a family history of breast cancer or a specific medical diagnosis are not covered for a mammogram. Diana Napper, founder of A Glimmer of Hope Foundation, feels that is too restrictive.

“Ninety percent of breast cancer does not have a family history,” said Ms. Napper. “What we found in the last two years is women presenting during pregnancy.” She said the doctor may assume “that they have lumpy breasts from being pregnant, and sometimes the physician will say ‘Well that happens when you are pregnant or during breastfeeding.’”

Ms. Napper said that most younger women are not great candidates for mammograms due to the density of their breasts, so ultrasounds are being offered as an alternative.

She said some women who suspect there may be an issue ask for a screening from their health care provider, but their doctors tell them the likelihood of breast cancer at their age is low.

“Women will call me [and say] ‘I have a horrible pain in my breast and the doctor said breast cancer doesn’t present as pain.’ Breast cancer can present as anything it chooses to,” said Ms. Napper.

Women often begin having pap smears at the age of 18 or 21 to have protection from cervical cancer at an early age. Ms. Napper said setting a baseline for breast cancer screenings at that age should be the protocol as well.

Ms. Napper said she is always impressed by the partnerships available in the Pittsburgh area.

“One thing about Pittsburgh, organizations like the Pittsburgh Pirates, Alan Faneca with the Pittsburgh Steelers, the amount of support these people bring, it’s unbelievable,” said Ms. Napper.

Jacque Skowvron, executive director of the Pittsburgh Pirates Charities and Community Engagement, said they are proud to support this program.

“Whenever we have the chance to support the work of two great partners like A Glimmer of Hope and AHN, we are always happy to be able to do so,” Ms. Skowvron said. “It is our hope that we can use our platform to help drive awareness for the important work that so many organizations like Glimmer of Hope and AHN are doing to ensure those who need the resources they offer can have access.”

The screening program is going on now. Women under the age of 40 who are looking to have a mammogram and have either been denied coverage for the procedure or do not have health insurance can get more information on the program or schedule an appointment by calling 412-315-3999.

Cindy Alexander is a freelance writer.

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