



## **CHCHD News**

*Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department*

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### **Screening Is Key to Beating Breast Cancer**

Chattanooga, TN – October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month and the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department urges women over the age of 40 to get a clinical breast exam and mammogram. These screening tests are powerful weapons in the fight against breast cancer. The survival rate is greater than 95 percent for women whose breast cancer is found at an early stage.

“Mammograms and clinical breast exams are still the best method for finding cancer early and offering protection against the disease, leading women to get treatment before the cancer is in advanced stages,” said Becky Barnes, administrator at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department.

Early signs of breast cancer may include skin irritation, dimpling, swelling, a breast lump, tenderness, nipple changes or pain or an abnormality detected on a mammogram. Women should contact their health care provider if any of these symptoms appear and should follow guidelines for yearly breast health screenings.

All women are at risk for breast cancer, especially as they age, and getting a mammogram has gotten easier and more accessible. Many areas in Tennessee now have mobile mammography units that travel to various sites to offer mammograms and breast exams. High-quality mammograms are also offered in some doctor’s offices and other locations. Women can contact the Health Department for information on screening services and mammogram locations.

“Most insurance policies cover annual mammograms for women, and all women who have Medicare have this as an annual benefit,” said Mary Jane Dewey, director of the Tennessee Breast and Cervical Screening Program.

The Tennessee Breast and Cervical Screening Program is available at the Chattanooga-Hamilton County Health Department to help uninsured women with limited income receive clinical breast exams, Pap tests and mammograms at no charge. For more information and eligibility requirements, call 209-8009 or visit <http://health.hamiltontn.org/ClinicalServices/SS/bccs.aspx>.

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