

# *Pink Ribbon Sunday...*

*Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday*



## **Mammography Saves Lives**

A Guide for African American and  
Hispanic American Community Leaders

## ***PINK RIBBON EVENTS***

*The pink ribbon is the symbol for breast cancer awareness.*

### **GET INVOLVED!**

About one in eight U.S. women will get breast cancer during her lifetime. You can help. You may even save lives.

How? By getting the church more involved.

Churches have always been a major source of education and support. Today, more than 180 million Americans – more than 7 out of 10 women – belong to a place of worship.

This is particularly true in African-American and Hispanic communities. Most women of color attend church or other worship services for comfort and guidance – especially during a health crisis.

As an active member of your church or congregation, you are in a wonderful place to help other women. We all need to learn more about breast cancer and take steps to protect ourselves. This guide tells you how to get started. You'll find three sections:

- 1 **An Overview** – what everyone should know about breast cancer and early detection.
- 2 **Energizing Your Members** – how to plan activities to increase breast cancer screening.
- 3 **For More Information** – where to go for more information about breast cancer services and support programs.

## ***SECTION 1 – AN OVERVIEW***

### **Who's at Risk of Breast Cancer?**

Every woman is at risk for breast cancer. It's the second most common cancer among women. A woman's risk for breast cancer increases if she:

- has reached the age of 50 (which is 75% of all breast cancer cases)
- has a close relative, like a mother or sister, with the disease
- started menstruating before age 12
- began menopause after age 55
- had her first child after age 30
- has never had children

What causes breast cancer? How can it be prevented? Unfortunately, we don't know the answers to these questions yet. But researchers are trying to find out if things like heredity, diet, lifestyle or environmental factors play a role.

### **Early Detection – The Best Protection**

We do know that early detection is the best defense. If you detect breast cancer at its earliest stage, the chance of successful treatment is much higher. That is why doctors, nurses and other health professionals strongly urge women to:

- See a doctor for a breast exam
  - women between the ages of 20 and 39 should have a clinical breast exam by a health professional every three years
  - women in their 40's and older should have a mammogram every 1 to 2 years
- women who are at higher than average risk of breast cancer should talk with their health care providers about whether to have mammograms before age 40 and how often to have them

Please refer to the National Cancer Institute website ([www.cancer.gov](http://www.cancer.gov)) for this information.

## **Common Symptoms**

Signs of breast cancer include any of these changes in the breast:

- A lump or thickening that won't go away
- A change in breast size or shape
- Swelling
- Pain
- Nipple tenderness
- Nipple fluid
- Skin irritation
- Puckering
- Dimpling

Most lumps are not cancerous – 80% are caused by other things. But to be safe, a woman should see a doctor right away if she finds any of these symptoms.

*Note: This advice applies to men too. Even though men are far less likely than women to get breast cancer, they can get it.*

## **The Good News About Mammograms**

A mammogram is a low-dose x-ray of the breast. It is both fast and safe. Many hospitals, clinics, x-ray centers and mobile vans offer mammograms.

A trained expert puts the breast between two plastic plates that gently spread it out. He or she then takes two pictures: one from above and one from the side. A special doctor, called a radiologist, then examines the pictures.

You should receive your results by mail within 30 days. If not, call the facility. Keep your original mammogram and use it if you get a second opinion from another doctor.

*Note: Tell the mammography staff if you have breast implants. These can make it more difficult for the staff to see problems in a mammogram.*

## The Mammography Quality Standards Act (MQSA)

All facilities that offer mammograms in the U.S. must meet high standards set by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). In fact, it's a law, called the Mammography Standards Quality Act (MQSA).

Always look for an MQSA certificate. It shows that the staff has completed special training and that the equipment has been properly inspected.



## SECTION 2 – Energizing Your Members

To get members of your church interested, try this idea. First, schedule an activity to raise awareness of the basics (*topics in Section 1 of this guide*). Combine this activity with one of your routine activities like “Women’s Day”, Mission Day, health fairs, or workshops.

Then, do a follow-up activity in a more homey or comfortable setting. That’s when people can get more details on diagnosis, treatment, clinical trials and other topics.

### Open the Discussion

A regular worship service would be a good time to raise your church’s awareness of breast cancer. Start with your own church. Then branch out to others.

A brief talk can be a powerful way to get people interested. Ask the reverend or pastor to speak alone or try bringing in a guest speaker, like a breast cancer survivor, a doctor or a representative from a breast cancer organization.

When planning this activity, first speak with leaders of the church and gain their support. You'll also want to ask these questions:

What time is the service?

Are there specific seating arrangements?

What types of discussions are allowed during the service?

When during the service will you or your guest speak?

Who will introduce you or your guest?

How much time will you be allowed?

You and the guest speaker should remain after the service for 20 to 30 minutes. This will give you the chance to greet members of the church, answer any questions and create interest in follow-up activities.

## **Follow-Up Activities**

The first discussion should lead to a more in-depth breast cancer education program. With proper advance notice, this can take place right after the service. Or it can be planned for another day. It should be well organized, informative and brief.

Arrive early to the follow-up activities to set up displays and pass out handouts, including brochures, buttons and/or bookmarks. Special pink ribbons are also a great idea – they are a symbol of the fight against breast cancer. To get these materials, contact your local hospital or any of the organizations listed in Section 3 of this guide.

Suggested topics for this activity include:

Basic breast cancer information

Early detection and mammography

New advancements in detection and treatment

## **Encouraging Women to Get Mammograms**

Your church can use several methods to encourage women to get a mammogram, including:

Posting a sign-up sheet for a group visit

Setting up car pools so women can get to the facility more easily

Organizing a visit from a mobile van that offers mammography

Organizing a buddy system for emotional support

## **More Steps Your Church Can Take**

Some ideas to inspire your church to organize ongoing activities about breast cancer include:

- Inviting guest speakers
- Passing out breast cancer educational material, such as brochures and fact sheets
- Creating health fairs
- Planning special activities during breast cancer awareness month, such as organized walks
- Establishing support groups for patients, survivors and their families
- Providing members with individual counseling
- Helping breast cancer patients with daily chores, such as preparing meals, child care and, in some cases, paying bills
- Offering prayers
- Giving women information on how to get more resources

## ***SECTION 3 – FOR MORE INFORMATION***

### **Breast Cancer Screening and Treatment Resources Checklist**

This checklist is intended to assist churches and their members in determining what resources exist in their cities for breast cancer screening and treatment.

#### **Finding Mammography Facilities**

Women can find the nearest mammography facility with FDA approval by calling:  
The American Cancer Society (1-800-ACS-2345 or 1-800-227-2345)  
The Cancer Information Service (1-800-CANCER or 1-800-422-6237)

What hospitals, clinics or managed care organizations in my city specialize in and provide the following?

#### **Breast Cancer Diagnostic Examinations**

- Clinical Breast Examination
- Fine Needle Aspiration
- Mammogram
- Sonogram
- Surgical Biopsy

## Helping the Needy

The church breast cancer committee should keep a file on the treatment options that are available for women who are uninsured, underinsured and/or do not qualify for Medicaid or Medicare. This list might include volunteer doctors, local charities and other sources of help.

Some women might be eligible for a free or low-cost mammogram. Call your local hospital or clinic for more information.

*And don't forget to offer meals, baby-sitting, counseling and comfort for the entire family.*

For free or low cost health services go to <http://ask.hrsa.gov/pc/>

## Finding Treatment Facilities

- o Local Hospital(s)
- o Cancer Center(s)
- o Clinic(s)
- o Health Maintenance Organization(s)

Questions to consider regarding the availability of resources:

1. Does my city have provisions for treating women who are underinsured, uninsured, and/or do not qualify for Medicaid?
2. If not, what type of support does my city need to enable it to provide free or reduced-cost treatment?
  - Volunteer physicians
  - Health Department resources
  - Support from local charities
  - Other
3. Will my church incur liability if we provide free mammography screening? If so, what measure(s) would improve our ability to provide service?
4. What hospitals, clinics or managed care organizations in my city specialize in and provide the following?

Breast Cancer Treatment Choices

- o Lumpectomy
- o Modified Radical Mastectomy
- o Partial or Segmented Mastectomy
- o Total or Simple Mastectomy
- o Breast Reconstruction
- o Chemotherapy
- o Radiation Therapy

5. Are the following specialists available in or near my city?

- Medical Oncologist (a doctor who administers anticancer drugs or chemotherapy)
- Pathologist (a doctor who examines tissue removed by biopsy to determine whether it is cancerous)
- Plastic Surgeon (a doctor who specializes in rehabilitative and cosmetic surgery-breast reconstruction)
- Radiation Oncologist (a doctor who supervises radiation therapy)
- Radiation Therapy Technologist (a trained technician who assists the radiation oncologist in administering external radiation treatment)
- Surgeon (a doctor specializing in breast biopsy, lumpectomy and mastectomy)

6. Are there support groups and rehabilitation programs for women who may be diagnosed with breast cancer in your city? Support groups and aftercare programs for women with breast cancer may be hospital or community based, such as:

Look Good...Feel Better (The American Cancer Society):

<http://www.lookgoodfeelbetter.org>

Y-Me National Breast Cancer Organization: <http://www.y-me.org>

YWCA Encore Program : <http://www.ywcaencore.org>

Other Resources

Food and Drug Administration

<http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/mammography/index.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/breast/> or 1-888-842-6355

National Cancer Institute

<http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/types/breast> or 1-800-4-CANCER

American Cancer Society

<http://www.cancer.org> or 1-800-ACS-2345

# Sample Press Release

## { Church Name } Promotes Mammography Screening

### NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:  
[Month, Day, Year]

CONTACT: Name  
Telephone

[Name] Church Promoted Mammography Screening

{ City, State }—[Your church's name] will host Pink Ribbon Awareness Day on Sunday, [month, day, year], [location –street address, city and state], at (time) to promote mammography screening.

{ Church Name } is urging women to take responsibility for their breast health and is promoting “(Church Name) Mammography Awareness Day”. Mammography is the best available method to detect breast cancer in its earliest, most treatable stage – an average of one to three years before a woman can feel a lump. Mammography also identifies cancers too small to be felt during a clinical breast examination.

The statistics support the { Church name } concern. Each year, an estimated 170,000 women will learn they have breast cancer and an estimated 40,000 women will lose their lives. And African American women are more likely to die of breast cancer than women of all other races

“Breast Cancer is not just a woman’s disease,” Reverend [name] noted, “because men and children and whole families are devastated when breast cancer strikes a loved one.”

“There is no better time and no better place for women to learn about breast health and mammography screening. Remember, early detection saves lives”, said Rev. [name].

# # #

**(Sample Flyer)**

**St. John Baptist Church presents**

# **Pink Ribbon Day**



**Breast Health Awareness Program**  
**Sunday, December 3, 2004**  
**9:30 AM – 12:30 PM**

**Come enjoy...**  
**Refreshments and Door Prizes! And**

**Learn How to Give Yourself the “Gift of Life”**

# (Sample Evaluation)

## Pink Ribbon Event Evaluation

[Church name, address]

[Date]

We value your opinion and would appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to complete our evaluation form:

1. How would you rate [Church Name] Pink Ribbon Mammography Event in general?

Excellent     Very Good     Average     Fair     Poor

2. Was the program of benefit to you?

Yes                       No

3. Do you currently get an annual mammogram?

Yes                       No

4. If not, will you make an appointment to get a mammogram?

5. How do you plan to use the information that you received today?

I will practice monthly breast examination, I will see a doctor on an annual basis, and I will get an annual mammogram.

I will tell a friend about the importance of regular mammograms.

6. What are two new things you learned from the Pink Ribbon Event?

1. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **The Good News About Mammography**

You've heard some myths about mammography, but here are the facts:

- Although most healthcare professionals remember to refer women for mammograms, you shouldn't wait for one to suggest it. Schedule your mammogram today.
- Once is not enough. Every women age 35 should have a baseline mammogram. Women age 40 and older should have a mammogram every 1-2 years.
- The radiation given off from modern mammography equipment is considered so low that it poses no risk of triggering cancer in healthy cells.
- Mammograms can detect breast cancers when they are very small and long before they cause symptoms or problems.
- A mammogram cannot prevent breast cancer; however, mammography is an excellent tool to screen for and detect the disease at an early stage. Currently mammography is the only FDA approved exam to screen for breast cancer in asymptomatic women (women who have not symptoms of breast cancer such as a lump).
- Mammograms can detect more breast cancers very early, giving you more treatments options and a greater chance of survival. Mammograms could save your life.

# "Pink Ribbon Sunday"

& Mammography Information



A  
Mammography  
Initiative

FREE

## FDA Office of Women's Health Publications

**Pink Ribbon Sunday: Quality Mammography Saves Lives**  
(For African American and Hispanic American Community Leaders)

### Mammography Fact Sheet

Get your free copy at: <http://www.fda.gov/womens/pubs.html>

## National Cancer Institute Materials

### BROCHURES

**Mammograms:** not just once, but for a lifetime

NCI Publication #P392

**Los Mamogramas** No solamente una vez, sino por toda la vida

NCI Publication #P406

**Los Mamogramas** No solamente una ez, sino por toda la vide (large print)

NCI Publication #H497

**Understanding Breast Changes:** A Health Guide for Women

NIH Publication #02-3536

### BOOKMARKS

**Mammograms:** not just once, but for a lifetime (African American women)

NCI Publication #Z271

**Mammograms:** not just once, but for a lifetime (Hispanic women)

NCI Publication #Z274

**Los Mamogramas,** No solamente una vez, sino por toda la vide  
(large print) NCI Publication #Z463

To order FREE copies from the National Cancer Institute:

Call the Cancer Information Service (1-800-422-6237) and select the prompt to order publications.

*This guide is a project of:*



and

