

BREAST AND CERVICAL CANCER

Background

Approximately 46,000 women die each year from either breast or cervical cancer. On average, every two minutes, a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer in the United States, and in 2024, an estimated 310,720 women will be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer. Women in rural areas often have a more difficult time accessing screening mammography and are more likely to have a late-stage breast cancer diagnosis. However, early detection and follow-up can prevent virtually all cervical cancer deaths and reduce breast cancer deaths by 16% in women over age 40.

CDC Programs Addressing Breast and Cervical Cancer

To improve access to breast and cervical cancer screening, Congress passed the Breast and Cervical Cancer Mortality Prevention Act of 1990, which directed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to create the [National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program](#) (NBCCEDP). The NBCCEDP is overseen by CDC's Division of Cancer Control and Prevention (DCPC) and is the only national breast and cervical cancer screening program in the United States. Increased funding would allow states to identify and screen more difficult-to-reach, uninsured, or underinsured women. Funds would also be used to expand activities to eliminate barriers and increase screening for all women, including those who may be insured but cannot afford screenings or do not have access to healthcare services. Additional activities include evidence-based interventions such as patient/provider reminder systems in clinics for low-income populations, patient navigation and care coordination proven to increase screening rates and linking women to clinical services where they live and work.

DCPC funding supports:

- All 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, 5 US-Affiliated Pacific Islands, and 13 tribes / tribal organizations identify people with low income who do not have adequate insurance, gain access to timely breast and cervical cancer screening as well as diagnostic and treatment services.
- NBCCEDP also provides patient navigation services to help individuals overcome barriers and receive timely access to quality care.

Since 1991, NBCCEDP-funded programs have served more than 6.4 million women. In 2023 alone, the NBCCEDP provided breast cancer screening and diagnostic services to 273,989 women and diagnosed 1,970 invasive breast cancers and 688 precancerous lesions. The program also provided cervical cancer screening and diagnostic services to 129,082 women and diagnosed 87 invasive cervical cancers and 6,206 precancerous lesions.

Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection

Compared to no screening, screening every 2 years for women aged 50 to 74 reduces breast cancer deaths by 26%. When caught in its earliest, localized stage, the 5-year relative survival rate for breast cancer is 99%. Prevention efforts for cervical cancer have proven particularly effective with the cervical cancer death rate dropping by more than half since the mid-1970s because of prevention programming and screening.

The Cost of Breast and Cervical Cancer

Breast cancer has the highest treatment cost of any cancer – the annual medical cost for breast cancer is \$29.8 billion. The national expenditure for medical services relating to cervical cancer in 2020 was \$2.3 billion. Medicare spends, on average, \$35,849 annually per patient to treat breast cancer.