



## NEWS RELEASE

### ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## Free mammograms, pap smears provided for women 40-64

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A statewide program offered through the Alabama Department of Public Health provides free breast and cervical cancer screenings for women who are unable to pay for a mammogram or a pap smear.

To qualify for the free services, women must

- Be ages 40 through 64
- Have a family income at or below 200 percent of federal poverty guidelines
- Have no insurance or be underinsured

For example, a single woman may have an income of up to \$21,660 per year to be eligible while a woman in a family of four may have an annual income of up to \$44,100 to qualify. Underinsured means a woman is unable to pay a high deductible or her health insurance does not include screenings.

“It is becoming common knowledge that early cancer screening, early detection, saves lives,” said Nancy Wright, director of the Cancer Prevention and Control Division. “This is especially true for breast and cervical cancer. Early cancer screening may seem impossible to women without insurance--but it’s not. We urge Alabama women to make a screening appointment today.”

The Alabama Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection program (ABCCEDP) was created to help low income, uninsured and underinsured women receive free breast and cervical cancer screening so these cancers can be detected early. Free services include a pelvic examination, pap smear, clinical breast examination, mammogram and diagnostic services.

If follow-up is needed, the program will pay for diagnostic testing such as an ultrasound, biopsy or colposcopy. If a woman is diagnosed with cancer, the program will refer her to Medicaid for treatment of breast or cervical cancer.

Since 1996, the program has provided screenings for nearly 70,000 women. Of these, 1,200 women were diagnosed with breast cancer and 320 with cervical cancer. In addition, any woman under 64 who has been recently diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer may be eligible for treatment through Medicaid.

“Discovering breast cancer early will increase your chance of survival,” Ms. Wright said. “The earlier the stage it is detected, the more successfully it can be treated. When breast cancer is diagnosed early, the survival rate is over 95 percent. But this figure declines dramatically when cancer is found in later stages.”

For more information or to find out if you are eligible for free breast and cervical cancer screening services or breast cancer treatment through Medicaid please call 1-877-252-3324 toll free.

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