

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE October 1, 2003

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Who: Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency

What: October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

The Branch – Hillsdale – St .Joseph Community Health Agency is raising community awareness in celebrating National Breast Cancer Awareness Month for the month of October.

In the past 10 years, more than 15,000 women in Michigan have died from breast cancer, more than 1,500 each year. The Community Health Agency believes this number is too high. 9 out of 10 women with breast cancer **survive** if the cancer is found and treated early, before it has spread beyond the breast. The Community Health Agency, along with the Michigan Department of Community Health, recommends all women age 40 and older receive a mammogram and clinical breast exam each year. Many women do not receive this invaluable and often life saving service due to a variety of economic factors as well as some well established myths.

Myth # 1 - Mammograms are painful.

Fact: A mammogram is merely an X-ray of your breast. Although the procedure may cause some discomfort, it is very quick and the benefits are immeasurable.

Myth # 2 – There is no history of breast cancer in my family, so I don't need to worry.

Fact: 80% of women who develop breast cancer have no family history of the disease.

Myth # 3 – I don't need a mammogram, I don't have any symptoms.

Fact: Mammograms may detect breast cancer up to 2 years before you or your doctor can feel a lump.

Myth # 4 – If a mammogram does find something it's too late. I don't want to know!!

Fact: 9 out of 10 women **survive** if the cancer is found and treated early, before it has spread beyond the breast. Find out early and save a life; your own. Do it for you and the ones you love.

Now you know the **myths** and the **facts**. If you are over 40 and haven't had a mammogram, make an appointment to see your healthcare provider today. If you do not have an HMO or Medicare, you may be eligible for FREE breast screening services through the Branch – Hillsdale – St. Joseph Community Health Agency's Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program. This program offers no cost mammograms, clinical breast exams, Pap tests and pelvic exams for women who meet the program insurance and income guidelines. Call today to see if you qualify for this service.

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