

### Karen's Corner



Breast and cervical cancers are the leading causes of cancer-related deaths among West Virginia women. Unfortunately, the same is true for heart disease. We know that our state has very high rates of diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure and smoking—all of which increase your risk of developing heart disease. These facts are scary; however, there are things we can do to improve these statistics for our mothers, daughters, sisters, aunts, nieces and friends, and DHHR can help.

Breast and cervical cancer have very few warning signs, which is why it is so important to be screened early. Cervical cancer is highly preventable with Pap screening tests and the vaccine to combat human papillomavirus (HPV), which is the main cause of cervical cancer. Cervical cancer deaths decreased 70% between 1955 and 1992, and continue to decline each year due to increasing use of the Pap test. The Pap test can detect changes in the cervix before cancer develops and it can detect cancer in its earliest stages when more treatment options are available. The HPV

vaccine is nearly 100% effective in preventing the most common types of HPV-related cervical cancer. For males and females under the age of 26, HPV vaccination is available and helps to prevent cervical cancer in women.

It's important to remember that half of all cervical cancers occur in women rarely or never screened for cancer, and another 10%–20% of cancers develop among women who were screened, but did not receive adequate follow-up care. Through the West Virginia Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program (WVBCCSP), DHHR offers free or low-cost services, including clinical breast exams, pelvic exams, Pap tests and mammograms, for low-income, uninsured or underinsured women between the ages of 25 and 64. Funded by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), these services are offered by more than 300 providers throughout the state. If there is an abnormal finding, WVBCCSP has funds for further diagnostic procedures and treatment. Women who find breast cancer early have more choices for treatment and a greater chance of being treated successfully.

Those enrolled in the WVBCCSP may also be eligible for the WV WISEWOMAN Program, a DHHR initiative aimed at detecting and decreasing women's risk of heart disease. WISEWOMAN has been available for more than a decade and offers support to women, ages 30-64, in an effort to address cardiovascular risk factors. Women who are enrolled in the WVBCCSP but go to a healthcare provider that does not offer WISEWOMAN have the option to go to a WISEWOMAN provider site. There, they can participate in the lifestyle program of WISEWOMAN which includes the cost of the annual membership in TOPS, or Take Off Pounds Sensibly, an evidence-based weight loss program offered in weekly group meetings. Other services include home blood pressure monitoring and health coaching.

These programs encourage and empower us to take charge of our own health. This means working in partnership with healthcare providers to determine a screening schedule and paying attention to our bodies. Routine breast and pelvic exams, along with breast self-exams, Pap tests and mammograms can be your best assurance of early detection and treatment. The same is true for heart disease; routine blood pressure checks and blood tests for diabetes and cholesterol, waist circumference and weight can lead to early detection and treatment. Aside from screening, let's make a healthy lifestyle a top priority. Quitting smoking, exercising more and eating a healthier diet are all changes that can make a big difference.

Even if you are not eligible for these programs, you probably know someone who is. That person may be a loved one, a friend, a co-worker or a neighbor. Take this opportunity to share what could be a lifesaving resource with a West Virginia woman today: <https://www.wvdhhr.org/bccsp/>

## Patients from William R. Sharpe, Jr. Hospital donate to WVU Children's Hospital and VA Nursing Home

Patients from William R. Sharpe, Jr. Hospital, a 150-bed acute care facility located in Weston, recently hand crafted more than 300 greeting cards for organizations in West Virginia, including WVU Children's Hospital and the Veteran's Nursing Facility-Clarksburg.

This initiative, coordinated by the hospital's Volunteer Services Department, has brought a sense of happiness to not only the children and veterans who received the cards, but also to the compassionate patients at Sharpe.

"We have already received letters from the organizations who have benefited from donations of cards," said Volunteer Services Coordinator Krista Adkins. "Our patients really enjoy knowing that their efforts have made a positive impact."

Each card, decorated with various themes for children and veterans, included a note of warm wishes from the patient. Sharpe residents made these using donations of cardstock, stickers, and adhesive strips. The Friends Auxiliary of Sharpe Hospital sponsored provision of envelopes.

"We hope to expand projects like these to provide more opportunities for our patients to find joy participating in service to others," stated Krista.

The Friends Auxiliary is a non-profit group of volunteers dedicated to enriching the lives of individuals impacted by severe mental illness which results in inpatient treatment. The Auxiliary regularly accepts donations for this and other projects. All contributions are tax deductible and may be made at the reception desk (lobby) 24 hours per day, including weekends and holidays.

For more information regarding this project or how to become a volunteer, please contact Krista Adkins at 304-269-1210 Ext. 339.



## April is Child Abuse Prevention Month



Travelers throughout West Virginia may see sparkling blue and silver pinwheels planted in gardens during the month of April. Individuals and organizations plant pinwheel gardens every April for Child Abuse Prevention month as reminders that all children deserve to grow up healthy, safe, and loved.

2016 celebrates the 40th anniversary of the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act, the

first federal child protection legislation. This legislation, commonly referred to as CAPTA, began a new national response to child abuse and neglect and provided states with funds for prevention, identification and treatment programs. In 1983, April was officially named Child Abuse Prevention Month, and in 1989, the color blue and blue ribbons became a symbol for child abuse prevention and as a memorial to children whose lives have been affected due to abuse or neglect.

In addition to pinwheel gardens, many organizations will participate in Wear Blue Day on Friday, April 8. The West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources encourages its employees and affiliates to wear blue, to support community-based prevention and intervention, and to realize the important role each of us play in promoting the social and emotional well-being of children and families in our communities and throughout West Virginia every day.

