



## Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program (BCCSP)

**Bridging the Gap to Women's Health**

**Quarterly Newsletter**

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# January 2026



### Welcome to the Cervical Health Awareness BCCSP newsletter!

In this edition of the BCCSP newsletter, you will find important information regarding cervical health awareness and cervical cancer awareness month, Pap and HPV screenings, program updates, training opportunities, contact information, and much more. The WV Division of Women's and Family Health includes BCCSP, WISEWOMAN, and Family Planning Programs. The purpose of the West Virginia Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program is to decrease cancer incidence, morbidity, and mortality by focusing on populations who are underserved and who have increased cancer risk due to health inequities. The WISEWOMAN program is dedicated to helping women in WV lower their risk of cardiovascular disease through personalized, evidence-based strategies.

If you have suggestions for upcoming newsletters, please contact a BCCSP staff member or email [dhomcfhwvbccsp@wv.gov](mailto:dhomcfhwvbccsp@wv.gov). We would love to hear from you!

## January and Cervical Health Awareness

In 2025 it is estimated that approximately 13,360 new cases of cervical cancer will be diagnosed and approximately 4,320 women will die from cervical cancer, according to the American Cancer Society (ACS).

Cervical health awareness month is officially observed in January of each year and is a public health initiative with the goal of educating women about prevention, screening, and early detection of cervical cancer. This includes HPV vaccination, routine screening and follow up of abnormal results, and healthy lifestyle choices.

The white and teal ribbon is recognized internationally as support for cervical health awareness and cervical cancer awareness. The United States Congress created the Cervical Health Awareness Month, and it's observed throughout the U.S. in January. Use this month to spark conversation and spread awareness of the importance of screening and HPV vaccination.

Screening is crucial in preventing cervical cancer and improving treatment outcomes. Empowering women to prioritize their health through regular screening helps reduce the overall incidence and mortality of cervical cancer. For more information, see the "Cervical Health Awareness Month Toolkit" on the BCCSP website.



### HPV and Pap Smear

Recent updates have been introduced to cervical cancer screening guidelines, often causing confusion among patients and healthcare providers, as the term "Pap smear" is still widely used to refer to all screening tests. The new guidelines reflect a clear shift toward primary HPV testing, which is considered more effective for certain age groups.

The difference between the two tests is that an HPV test looks for the presence of the virus itself, while a Pap smear looks for abnormal cell changes (precancerous) on the cervix that are caused by the virus. The abnormal cell changes can be a result of HPV. Both are crucial cervical cancer screening tools that use the same sample.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 9 of every ten cases of cervical cancer are caused by HPV. Additionally, the National Institutes of Health (NIH), and the World Health Organization (WHO) report 99.7% of cervical cancers are HPV related. There are two high risk types (HPV 16 & HPV 18) of the virus that are responsible for approximately 70% of cervical cancer cases in the world.

The United States Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF) is the most recognized resource for cancer screening and prevention guidelines. The recommendations for women aged 21-29 include a pap smear every three years, for women aged 30-65 primary HPV testing every 5

years, cytology alone (Pap Smear) every three years, or co-testing every three years.

Here is a summary of national recommendations for Cervical Cancer Screening:

Organization	Recommendation	Notes
<b>American Cancer Society (ACS)</b>	<p><b>Preferred Test:</b></p> <p>Women age 25-65</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Primary HPV testing every 5 years, <i>or</i></li> <li>→ If primary HPV testing is not available, cotesting with HPV and Pap test</li> <li>→ Cytology every 5 years, <i>or</i></li> <li>→ Cytology (Pap test) alone every 3 years.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recommends against screening in those:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Who have undergone a total hysterectomy with removal of the cervix for reasons other than cervical cancer or precancerous lesions.</li> <li>→ Women older than 65 years: Cervical cancer screening may be discontinued for individuals who have undergone regular screenings with normal results over the past decade.</li> </ul>
<b>U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF)</b>	<p><b>Preferred Test:</b></p> <p>Women age 21-29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Screening for cervical cancer every 3 years with cervical cytology (Pap Smear) alone.</li> </ul> <p>Women aged 30 to 65</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Screening every 3 years with cervical cytology (Pap Smear) alone <i>or</i></li> <li>→ Every 5 years with high-risk human papillomavirus (hrHPV) testing alone, <i>or</i></li> <li>→ every 5 years with hrHPV testing in combination with cytology (cotesting).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Recommends against screening in those:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>→ Younger than 21 years.</li> <li>→ Women older than 65 years who have had adequate prior screening and are not otherwise at high risk for cervical cancer.</li> </ul>
<b>American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)</b>	Endorses USPSTF recommendations. See above.	Endorses USPSTF recommendations. See above.

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## HPV Self-Collection Update

BCCSP is currently working to implement the HPV self-collection test option for eligible BCCSP participants. This decision follows the FDA's approval of the tests in March 2024. The BCCSP program anticipates that offering this covered service will significantly increase the number of women screened for cervical cancer using HPV testing.

The test requires an order from a licensed provider and must be collected in a health care setting. The test is a vaginal swab that the patient collects in private. This is an option for women who are eligible for HPV only screening who do not want a pelvic exam and are at average risk for cervical cancer. Clinician collected samples are preferred, however self collection is sufficient. It is important for patients to understand that if results are abnormal, they will require additional testing.

One of the barriers that the program foresees is HPV only testing, as this is not offered to eligible women as often as it should be. BCCSP plans to overcome these barriers by focusing on education and training. Thank you to everyone that attended the HPV self collection steering committee. BCCSP will have updated policies and procedures, an HPV self collection standing order, and staff and provider education coming soon!

SCREENING SAVES LIVES!

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### Community Outreach



Community outreach plays a critical role in cancer prevention and early detection by building relationships within communities and improving access to care. These community relationships ensure that access to care is available with the goal of improved health outcomes. The primary goal of the Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program community outreach is to identify women who are eligible for the services that BCCSP provides. This involves partnering with providers to educate staff and patients about the program and to encourage enrollment and participation in BCCSP. The program is working with our providers and mobile units to identify eligible women. The program also had representation at several October Breast Cancer Awareness events across the state. BCCSP is working with many of our clinic partners and mobile units to help identify eligible women.

Is your organization participating in breast and cervical cancer screening activities or community outreach events? If you would like to share information about past or upcoming events, please email information to [billie.j.thomas@wv.gov](mailto:billie.j.thomas@wv.gov). **BCCSP would love to hear from you and see any pictures of your organization in action!**



## WV WISEWOMAN



The Well-Integrated Screening and Evaluation for WOMen Across the Nation (WISEWOMAN) program helps West Virginia women ages 35-64 to understand and reduce their risk for heart disease and stroke by promoting lasting heart-healthy lifestyle changes. This includes offering healthy behavior support services (HBSS), which can include Weight Watchers, health coaching, self-monitoring blood pressure, Walk with Ease, Taking Pounds Off Sensibly, and tobacco cessation. Look for monthly webinars and open forums from WISEWOMAN!

The WISEWOMAN Program has Health Coaches who can:

- Reinforce health lifestyle changes introduced in the HBSS.
- Provide one-on-one support between classes.
- Help participants set realistic Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-Based (SMART) goals.
- Provide a safe space to talk through challenges and find real solutions.

For more information about this program or to schedule onboarding training, please contact Trish Fyfe, Program Coordinator at [patricia.a.fyfe@wv.gov](mailto:patricia.a.fyfe@wv.gov). We're here to assist you in helping your patients reduce their cardiovascular risk factors.

## Talk about it Tuesday!



Talk about it Tuesday is a virtual open forum discussion that occurs monthly with BCCSP staff. This time is used to answer questions and hear feedback about the program. The session occurs the **second Tuesday of every month from 12:00pm-12:30pm**.

Please email [heather.m.turley@wv.gov](mailto:heather.m.turley@wv.gov) to request a link.





## Provider Training Dates

Provider training dates are offered on the **Third Thursday of each month**, from 12:00 pm-2:30 pm and are subject to change. Please see the list of training dates below.

- January 15, 12:00 pm-2:30 pm
- February 19, 12:00 pm-2:30 pm
- March 19, 12:00 pm-2:30 pm
- April 16, 12:00 pm-2:30 pm

Contact [heather.m.turley@wv.gov](mailto:heather.m.turley@wv.gov) to register or to obtain more information.

PLEASE VISIT THE WV BCCSP WEBSITE FOR MORE INFORMATION

[WV BCCSP](#)

The best protection  
is early **detection**

## WV BCCSP Staff

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<https://dhhr.wv.gov/bccsp/Pages/default.aspx>

