

Provider Press

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National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program Celebrates 30th Anniversary

This year marks the 30th anniversary of Congress' establishment of the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, which provided the initial funding for the West Virginia Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program (WVBCCSP). This program is a partnership between the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources Bureau for Public Health and the West Virginia University Cancer Institute's Office of Cancer Prevention and Control.

The WVBCCSP was one of the first four programs funded by the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, which was created to ensure that women have access to life-saving breast and cervical cancer screening. The WVBCCSP provides free and low-cost cancer screening, diagnostic imaging, and treatment services to West Virginia women. Since 1991, the WVBCCSP has enrolled 147,803 West Virginia women and provided more than 299,247 Pap tests, 241,753 mammograms, and 320,346 breast exams.

To date, WVBCCSP has detected:

- 1,363 cases of invasive breast cancer
- 160 cases of invasive cervical cancer
- 14,447 cases of abnormal cervical conditions that can lead to cervical cancer if not treated

On October 6th and 7th, the WVBCCSP joined 70 other programs at the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program's 30th Anniversary virtual celebration. The theme of this event was using data to advance health equity. Each program presented a virtual booth highlighting their work. West Virginia received high praise for its booth from several leading Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) officials.

"Love your meet the team - behind the scenes! After all, it is all about people - the women we serve and those who serve them."

Faye Wong- CDC Branch Chief of Program Services

Since the beginning, community relationships have formed the foundation of the WVBCCSP and include a provider network of more than 190 primary care clinics throughout the state. Additionally, civic groups, faith-based organizations, and many others help the WVBCCSP reach women who can benefit from the program.

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"The WVU Cancer Institute and WVBCCSP partnership has flourished over the years and represents a commitment to the women of West Virginia", Stephenie Kennedy-Rea, Ed.D., director for Cancer Prevention and Control at the WVU Cancer Institute, said. "The contributions of dedicated staff and community members working together exemplify how to successfully meet the healthcare needs of our citizens."

Congratulations to the WVBCCSP staff, providers, partners, and volunteers on a successful 30 years of advancing health equity for uninsured and underinsured women in the Mountain State.

Community Care of WV's Greenbank Clinic Improves Enrollment Process to Continue Screening Women Affected by COVID-19 Worksite Closures

The community of Greenbank is located in a very rural area of Appalachia with few employers and a low population density. This small town is nestled in the mountains of eastern West Virginia and is located 45 miles, or one hour, from the nearest mammography site. In August of 2021, Community Care of West Virginia's (CCWV) Greenbank Clinic discovered 52% of their patients identified as self-pay or uninsured. The closure of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory (NRAO), one of the few main employers in the area, accounted for the sudden increase in uninsured or self-pay patients at the clinic site during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Recognizing an opportunity to better serve their patients, the CCWV team worked with the West Virginia Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program's (WVBCCSP) Evidence-Based Intervention (EBI) initiative to develop a plan to better identify patients with financial barriers, enroll them into the WVBCCSP, and have them complete their breast and cervical cancer screenings. Sharing their success models best practices that may be useful to other WVBCCSP screening providers.

The team assessed the current process for enrolling patients into the WVBCCSP and found the clinic needed to be more deliberate and systematic with identifying a patient's insurance status, whether the patient is seeking a breast or cervical related health service, and if the patient is qualified for the program. This information was used to identify several steps to improve the process. First, the WVBCCSP Community Clinic Interventionist provided training to 15 clinic and front desk staff on WVBCCSP services, which included eligibility criteria and required forms for patient enrollment. Second, clinic staff started including WVBCCSP enrollment forms as part of daily pre-visit chart preparations. Not only were the WVBCCSP forms uploaded into the electronic health system, but forms were printed for all exam rooms for easy accessibility during the patient's appointment. Third, at each woman's wellness visit or breast or cervical cancer screening visit, nurses and medical assistants were instructed to first check the health insurance status of the patient. If uninsured or underinsured, the staff initiated a conversation about the program. If the patient was eligible, staff could easily fill out the enrollment and data forms in the exam room. Finally, with implementation occurring during the height of the COVID-19 Pandemic, challenges arose from staffing shortages and staff being pulled to other areas. This required staff to adapt to complete workflows and processes for which they were not typically responsible for or even familiar with in their regular positions. The clinic overcame many of these challenges and maintained consistency by having a clearly communicated rooming process and printed workflow process map.

During the ten-month implementation period, Greenbank Clinic reported there were 14 patient appointments billed to the WVBCCSP and 10 new enrollments were completed. Scarlett Warner, RN and Regional Nursing Coordinator for CCWV commented, "It is easy to implement this way because we were already prepping charts and one more paper to print is not that big of a deal." This highlights how completing just one more step can have a tremendous impact on patient care.

Recently, the self-pay and uninsured rates have reduced significantly to 13%. The clinic credits the reopening of NRAO, as well as staff efforts to enroll eligible patients into the WVBCCSP, with this success. Although a large percentage of the patients who identified as self-pay or uninsured did eventually renew healthcare coverage through their employer, this dilemma provided the team with an opportunity to build a new workflow that increased efficiency and services in the clinic.

Moving forward, the quality improvement staff plan to generate reports on patients who identify as self-pay or uninsured. Once patients have been identified, the clinic will have newly hired patient navigators follow up with those patients prior to their visit to determine WVBCCSP eligibility. Patients who are eligible for the program will then be navigated to the clinic for enrollment and screening. This new process will also allow CCWV to file for reimbursement through the WVBCCSP by documenting the patient's navigation through barriers to screening.

Ultimately, CCWV's goal is to navigate each eligible patient to the program and complete the enrollment process so no eligible patient is without access to lifesaving cancer screenings. Overall, CCWV believes these changes are sustainable with appropriate staffing and are a valuable asset to both the clinic and the Greenbank community.