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Breast Cancer Awareness Month:

Wisconsin Program Ensures Thousands of Uninsured Women Get Mammograms

State Lawmakers Protect Screening Program in State Budget

Madison, Wis.—October 4, 2011—Thousands of Wisconsin women who might otherwise be unable to afford it will receive their doctor recommended mammogram this year thanks to the Wisconsin Well Woman Program. Well Woman provides uninsured or underinsured low-income women access to the potentially life-saving screening.

One such beneficiary is Wendy Zetting of Milwaukee. Zetting, 48, was laid off from her job of 21 years in 2009 and when she could no longer afford her COBRA insurance coverage, she looked to Well Woman to fill the gaps.

“It was just such a relief to know even though I was uninsured I was still going to get my mammogram,” said Zetting, who has had two biopsies and a lumpectomy for a benign lump during the last eight years. “There’s a world of difference between *hoping* you’re healthy and *knowing* you are.”

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death among Wisconsin women. Of the estimated 4,430 women who will be diagnosed in the state this year, 690 will die from the disease. Early stage breast cancer is 98 percent survivable, yet just 27 percent of late-stage breast cancer patients survive their disease.

“Ensuring all Wisconsin women—no matter what their insurance status—have access to age-appropriate screening is a smart way to save lives and save dollars,” said Allison Miller, Wisconsin Government Relations Director for the American Cancer Society.

The cost of a mammogram averages around \$150, while the cost to treat stage IV breast cancer can easily exceed \$50,000. According to the [National Cancer Institute](#), breast cancer treatment costs totaled \$16.5 billion nationwide in 2010.

Wisconsin’s Well Woman Program will continue to receive \$2.2 million in the state funding under the 2011-2013 state budget—the only public health program to be spared a 10 percent reduction.

“Mammograms are one of the most successful and cost effective early detection tools in the fight against cancer,” said Miller. “Thanks to the leadership of Governor Walker and Joint Committee of Finance co-chairs Senator Alberta Darling and Representative Robin Vos, the Legislature protected Well Woman funding and recognized the program’s importance to Wisconsin women, their families and their loved ones.”

In 2009, the most recent year for which data is available, Well Woman served nearly 10,000 women in need.

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Divisions and local offices in 3,400 communities, involving millions of volunteers across the United States. For more information anytime, call toll free 1.800.ACS.2345 or visit www.cancer.org