

Combining Patient Reminders with Convenience Information Fliers to Increase Breast Cancer Screening Among Insured Women

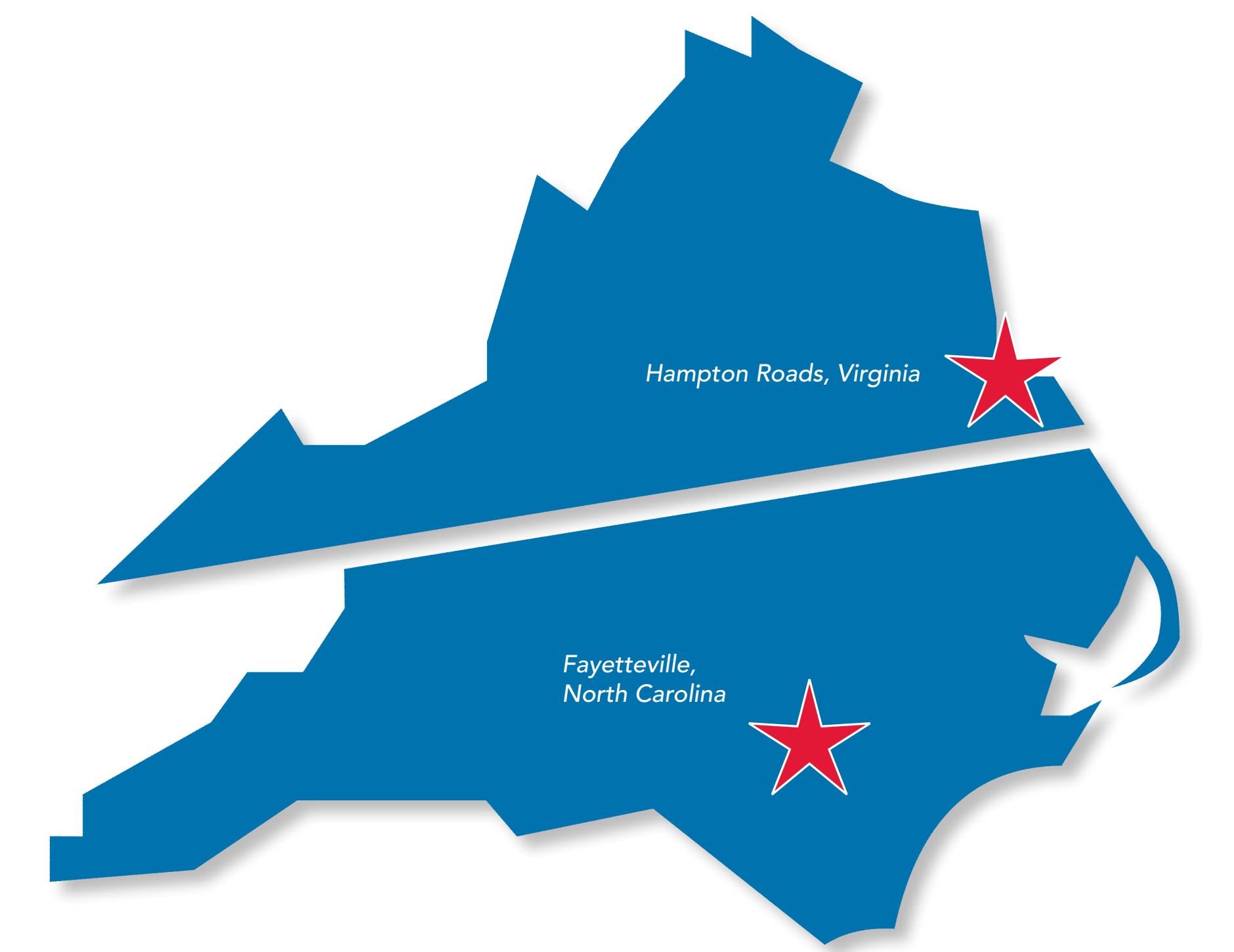
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Introduction

The death rate from breast cancer in the U.S. is declining due in part to early detection through screening. Although managed care plans are in a unique position to coordinate among insured patients, network providers and facilities to promote prevention, cancer screening often remains underutilized.

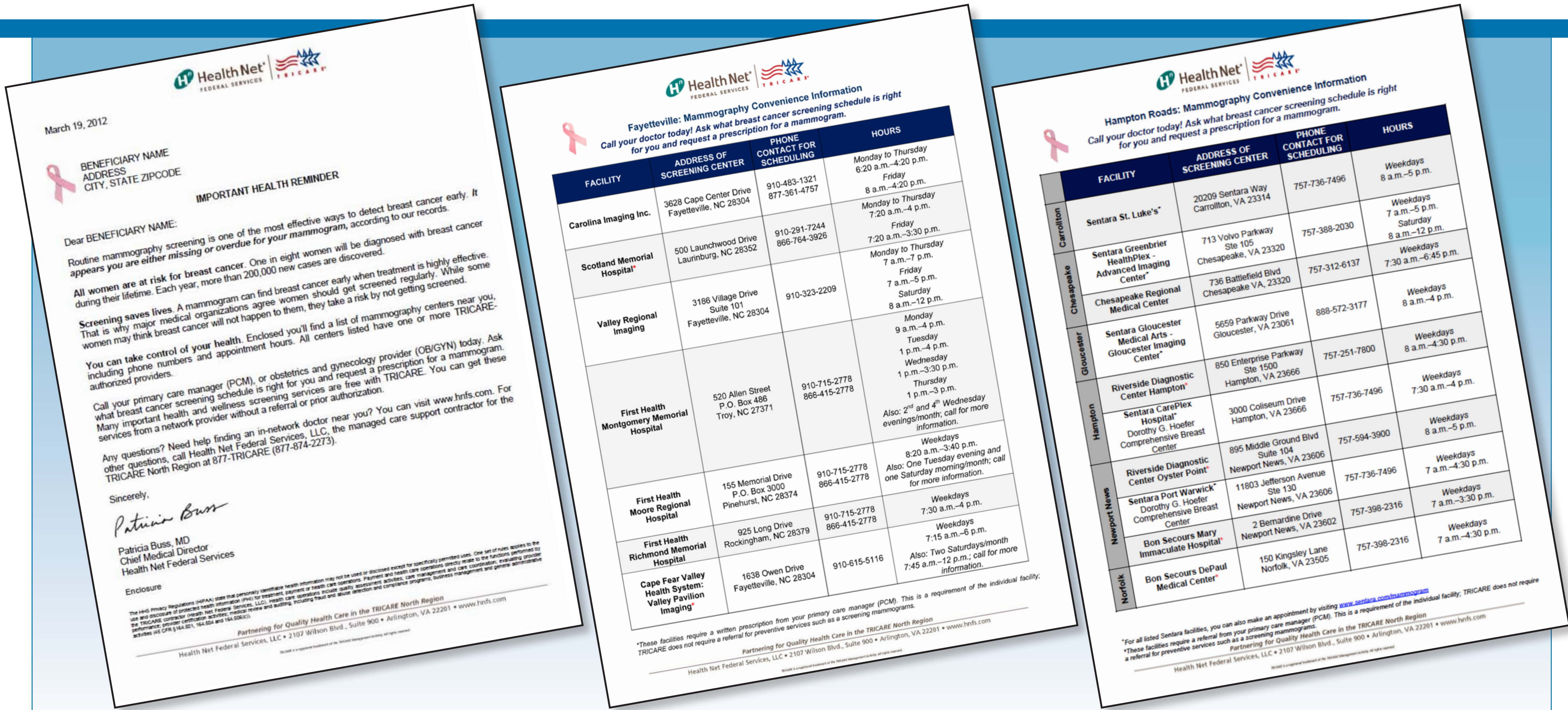
Objective

To assess the efficacy of a simple patient reminder letter that includes convenience information about nearby network mammography centers (addresses, hours, contact information) for increasing rates of breast cancer screening.



Methods

Two geographic areas – Hampton Roads, Virginia and Fayetteville, North Carolina – were selected based on a combination of low screening rates and high concentrations of network enrollees, providers and mammography facilities.



Methods (continued)

Women between the ages of 42 and 69 were identified, based on claims, as overdue for breast cancer screening (>two years since last mammogram).

In total, 6,928 letters were mailed, including 3,166 letters to women in the Fayetteville, NC geographic area and 3,762 letters to women in the Hampton Roads, VA geographic area.

Network primary care and OB-GYN providers in the select areas were also notified of the initiative. Although a referral is not required for preventive services such as mammography, it was anticipated patients may call their primary care provider with questions about screening. Providers could also contact Health Net for detailed lists of their patients who were overdue for screening.

Mammography centers that agreed to participate were included on the convenience list. Prior to the launch of the initiative, email outreach occurred with all the centers to prepare them and answer any questions.

The camouflage pink ribbon pin symbolizes our united front in the fight against breast cancer among military members and their families.

For over 25 years, Health Net Federal Services, LLC (Health Net) has partnered with the Department of Defense to provide health care services to the men and women who serve and their family members. Through the TRICARE program, Health Net assists nearly three million beneficiaries including active duty, retired, National Guard and Reserve, and family members.

Area	Total # eligible women *	Number of women who went from overdue to up to date	
		Intervention	Comparison (n=22,609)
Fayetteville	2,623	8.58% (225)	5.87% (1,328)
Hampton Roads	3,119	7.92% (247)	5.87% (1,328)
Total	5,742	8.22% (472)	5.87% (1,328)

*Out of the initial 6,928 women who were sent a letter, only 5,742 remained after removing those whose claims came in late (i.e. they were not overdue to begin with) and those who were no longer enrolled in the plan at the time of re-measurement.

Results

The outcome was receiving a mammogram within four months of the intervention, according to claims records.

Significantly more women who received the letter with convenience information received mammograms compared to women in all other geographic areas who didn't receive the reminder (8.22 percent vs. 5.87 percent; resulted in non-overlapping 95 percent CIs (0.075-0.089 vs. 0.056-0.062)).

Conclusion

Patient reminders, when combined with convenience information fliers, can be effective tools for increasing rates of breast cancer screening.



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