

Rural Outreach in New York State: Every Woman Counts in Chenango County Campaign

CHENANGO HEALTH NETWORK

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Background

Chenango Health Network (CHN), is a community-based rural health network, which serves Chenango County, part of the Appalachian Region in the south central portion of New York State.

CHN focuses on reaching the medically underserved, underinsured and uninsured residents of this rural county.

Women are not screened regularly for breast and cervical cancers for many different reasons:

- Limited access to health care.
- Low socio-economic status.
- Misinformation about cancer, cancer screening, treatment and insurance options.
- Belief about medicine in general.
- Concern about how a cancer test or diagnosis will affect their life.

Goals & Objectives

Reduce cancer incidence, morbidity and mortality and support healthy cancer survivorship in Chenango County.

Conduct education and outreach activities so that more rural women receive information about breast and gyn health, are screened for breast and cervical cancer, receive follow-up care and supportive services.



Methods

CHN uses a population-based, grassroots approach centered on science and fact to promote breast and gyn health awareness and to assist women with access to care.

CHN branded the program as **The Every Woman Counts in Chenango County Campaign**.

Health promotion activities depend on local women, staff and volunteers, who disseminate information, encourage women to be screened on a regular basis and support women who have been diagnosed with cancer.

Staff and volunteers conduct educational activities at community events, worksites, schools, granges, sporting events, fire halls, golf tournaments, etc.

The **Campaign** uses paid media: CHN's radio program, billboards and Pennysaver ads.

Women are recruited to join the **Campaign** and as part of their membership, they provide personal background information and agree to be screened.

Staff work with women on a one-to-one basis, primarily in-person and by phone, to motivate and support each individual to follow through with screenings and/or treatment.

Women are linked with health care providers (clinics or mobile units) for CBEs, mammograms, pap/pelvic exams and follow-up care. Women are enrolled into the NYS Cancer Services Program, if eligible.

Patient navigation may include information, referrals and advocacy support; peer counseling support; help with transportation; and new in 2013, help with co-pay expenses for women diagnosed with breast cancer. CHN also provides "companion bags" to women in treatment.

The **Campaign** is supported by funds from the Avon Foundation for Women; NYS Department of Health Office of Rural Health; NYSDOH Cancer Services Program; St. Agatha Foundation and local donors.

Results

CHN provides information to 6000+ women and assists 600-800 **Campaign** participants annually.

Conclusion

Targeted outreach works

- When information is localized and personalized.
- When cancer survivors support the message.
- Because women respond to one-to-one outreach efforts; many require on-going contact and support to follow through with screening appointments, diagnostic tests and treatment services.

Follow-up and patient advocacy and support, although time consuming, is critical to assuring that women receive screening, as well as, additional diagnostic and treatment services. Access to follow-up, advocacy and support may determine if a woman receives screening, additional diagnostic tests, treatment and supportive services.

Contact Information

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