

5 November 2018

Women encouraged to have regular mammogram

A BreastScreen NSW mobile van is travelling to Aboriginal, culturally and linguistically diverse and geographically isolated communities in the South Western Sydney Local Health District (LHD) to increase regular mammogram attendance.

BreastScreen South Western Sydney Local Health District Clinical Director Dr Patsy Soon said the van complements five screening centres ensuring all women have access to mammograms.

Some centres also offer Saturday appointments to improve access for women.

“Having a simple conversation with your friend, family member, neighbour or colleague about mammograms is really important,” Dr Patsy Soon said.

“Mammograms are the best way to detect breast cancer before it can be seen or felt, which allows for less invasive treatment and better recovery.”

Dr Patsy Soon said breast screening participation rates were driven by many factors including population growth and culturally and linguistically diverse communities which have lower rates of screening than the general population.

Mammogram screening numbers have increased in the District. Data shows BreastScreen NSW carried out an additional 32,251 mammograms in the latest two-year period. Every week, an average of 700 women are visiting sites in the District for a mammogram.

“This is a really positive sign that our message is being received. We need to continue to get this lifesaving message across,” Dr Patsy Soon said.

As many as 330 women in the District have breast cancer but will not be aware of it because they haven’t had a mammogram in the past two years.

The data, released by the Cancer Institute NSW during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, also shows 55,116 women aged 50 to 74 are either overdue for a mammogram or have not had one in the District.

In 2018/19, over \$4.6 million is being invested towards the South Western Sydney BreastScreen service.

Book a mammogram today by phoning 132 050 or visit breastscreen.nsw.gov.au

Initiatives specific to the LHD include:

- A mobile van travelling to 11 sites in 2019 to reach Aboriginal, culturally and linguistically diverse and geographically isolated communities. Suburbs the van visits include Miller, Revesby, Minto, Tahmoor, Fairfield and Airds.
- A bilingual community educator projects targets refugee and general Arabic speaking women.

- A van site in Leppington next year to meet the population growth of women aged 50 to 74 in the area.

BREASTSCREEN LOCATIONS

- Bankstown, Civic Towers Building, corner Rickard Rd and Jacobs Street
- Liverpool, 157-161 George Street
- Liverpool, 102 Bigge Street
- Campbelltown, Mawson Centre, 4 Browne St
- Bowral, 4/70 Bowral St
- Mobile van: Fairfield Forum, top level car park, Station St side until November 9
- Mobile van: Tahmoor, Harper Close beside the community centre from November 12 to December 19

CASE STUDY

Michelle Bui's proactive approach in having two-yearly mammograms resulted in the discovery of grade 3 breast cancer last year.

The Picnic Point mother of three said a mastectomy followed by six rounds of chemotherapy was a small price to pay for being vigilant.

"If I wasn't on top of my health, having those regular checks, who knows what could have happened to me and when cancer symptoms would have presented," she said.

"Having regular checks is peace of mind for me. I have since encouraged my siblings – I am one of six girls – now they are all getting their checks."

She said it is really important for women to make their health a priority by booking an appointment for a mammogram.

"The screening didn't take long, maybe five or 10 minutes, then you can go on living your life."