

MEDICAL BRIEFS

**Breast cancer**  
St. Mary Hospital's Marian Women's Center offers a Breast Cancer Support Group that is a free, self-help/education group that provides women the opportunity to share experiences and discuss subjects of mutual concern relating to breast cancer. The support group meets 7-8:30 p.m. the second Tuesday of each month (May 11) in West Addition B. Call (734) 655-1100.

**Thyroid support**  
A support group for people who suffer from thyroid disorders will meet 6:30 p.m. Monday, May 10, at the Plymouth Library. The speaker will begin at 7 p.m. and there is an opportunity for a question and answer session following their discussion. For reservations, call Tracy Green of Plymouth at (734) 453-7945.

**Blood drive**  
Girl Scout Troop 3321 of Livonia is holding a blood drive from 2-8 p.m. Monday, May 3, at Hull Elementary, 34716 Lyndon in Livonia. For more information, call Nancy DeBussche at (734) 464-8937 or Linda Hoff at (734) 464-4062.

**Menopause support**  
Join the menopause support group of St. Mary Hospital that gathers at the Marian Women's Center 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, May 6. The topic will be "Happy Mother's Day? Do You Have a Full House or an Empty Nest?"

**Long-term care**  
Hear Marilee Driscoll, national speaker and founder of The Long Term Care Learning Institute address how to avoid paying for long term care. See how to avoid making retirement planning mistakes, hear how to benefit from the most recent state of the art information on Medicaid guidelines and a new federal tax deduction at a free seminar from 10-11:30 a.m. Tuesday, May 11 at the Glen Oaks Country Club, 30500 W. 13 Mile Road in Farmington Hills (1/4 mile east of Orchard Lake). Call (800) 287-9208.

**CPR review**  
The American Red Cross will host a CPR review course for individuals with current CPR certificates to be recertified in Adult, Infant/Child, Community CPR or CPR for the professional rescuer. Certification and text is required to take this review course. Course length is four hours. Cost \$22. Programs run 6-10 p.m. May 19, May 25 and June 15 at the Livonia Red Cross Service Center, 29091 W. Six Mile, Livonia. Call (734) 642-2787 to register.

**Survivor picnic**  
Oakwood Hospital is hosting the seventh Annual Cancer Survivor's Day Picnic 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sunday, June 6, at Ford Woods Park. The picnic (barbecue, special events, gifts - rain or shine), held in conjunction with National Cancer Survivors Day, is for anyone with a history of cancer from time of diagnosis and for the remainder of life. For directions or information, call (313) 593-7270.

**Carnegie session starts May 19**  
Dale Carnegie has something for teenagers and adults who are interested in improving communication skills, developing a positive attitude and overcoming shyness. Enrollment is now under way for a new teen-adult Carnegie session in Farmington Hills. The class so far is about 60 percent filled. For more information, contact course instructor Sue Dahmann at (810) 220-8812. Orientation is scheduled from 6:30-to-10:30 p.m. Wednesday, May 19. The subsequent 12-week course begins on Wednesday, June 2.

Early detection vital in breast cancer fight

BY KIMBERLY A. MORTSON  
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In 1998, Michigan had the eighth highest recorded number of new breast cancer cases in the United States and tied with New Jersey for the eighth highest breast cancer mortality rate, according to the American Cancer Society.



One way women can take a proactive role against the disease is to perform monthly breast self-exams that don't cost anything and can be done in the privacy of your own home. Another way is to have a yearly mammogram. Unfortunately there is a large population of women who cannot afford to have the exam and they face a nine percent lower chance of survival than women in higher income brackets.

An initiative, in its ninth year of operation, the Mother's Day Mammograms program founded in Pennsylvania by the Rite Aid Women's Health Foundation and sponsored by Rite Aid Corp., serves to "connect uninsured and low-income women with free mammogram services," according to Lisa L. Kirchner a Rite Aid spokesperson.

The criteria to qualify is based on age (at least 40 years old), income level and insurance status. Women are encouraged to call (888) 748-3669 (RITENOW) to determine if they qualify for a free mammogram.

"The facts are clear. Early detection of breast cancer can save lives. In fact, when detected early, a woman has a 95 percent chance of survival," said Amy Johnson, executive director of The Rite Aid Women's Health Foundation. "But thousands of women cannot afford regular mammograms. The Foundation offers a solution by connecting uninsured women with healthcare providers who offer the screenings for free."

Redford resident Judy Timberlake knows all to well the benefits of having a regular physical exam. In 1989 a lump was detected

in her breast during a routine check up. In her mid-forties, Timberlake says she was somewhat mindful of the importance of visiting her doctor regularly as she was treated in her twenties for a fibroid tumor in the same breast.

"When you're young you are aware but your not, of the importance of going to your doctor annually. Unfortunately you don't have that fear or awareness that comes with age," said Timberlake.

Her mother was also diagnosed in her mid-40s with breast cancer and lived to be 78. Timberlake said the likelihood of her daughter developing breast cancer has never been a significant issue but the 22-year-old has made a practice of visiting her doctor on a regular basis.

Timberlake says she's scheduled for her annual mammogram in two weeks at the Josephine Ford Cancer Center at Henry Ford Hospital where she was treated a decade ago.

After the lump was detected through a mammogram, the Redford 55-year-old says a needle biopsy was performed to confirm the diagnosis and she underwent a mastectomy to remove the cancerous breast.

"I went through six months of chemotherapy because there was some lymph node involvement," said Timberlake. 1999 marked the 10th year for her as a breast cancer survivor.

The American Cancer Society reports that women have a 95 percent chance of surviving when breast cancer is confined to the breast and early detection is one of the best defenses against such a devastating disease.

"Women should faithfully see their doctor every year and perform breast self-exams," encouraged Timberlake.

Ford Motor Co. recently launched a new Web site in conjunction with the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation Race for the Cure® in Detroit (www.fordvehicles.com/fordforce)

"Ford Division is committed to the fight against breast cancer," explained Jan Klug, marketing communications manager. "We think we can make the most impact by helping educate women about the importance of

early detection and treatment. This new Web site will help us achieve that goal in a fun and interactive way."

Two of the five options on the site include "Healthy Living" — a link to information on breast cancer prevention, detection and management in a question-and-answer format, articles on topics like "Foods that fight cancer" and "Making things easy for my kids when I'm in the hospital" are posted every two weeks.

A second feature "Interact with Friends" allows you to send a friend an electronic postcard that serves as a reminder to conduct monthly self-exams and the other card encourages the recipient to register for a Race in their local community.

Additional features coming soon include a tribute wall which allows you to honor someone you know who has been affected by breast cancer. There will be space to leave a personal message, post your own photos from local Races, participate in a virtual Race and visit the virtual Ford Race tent.

The American Cancer Society's Relay for Life is coming to Livonia beginning at noon Friday, June 18, and will conclude the following day at noon at Stevenson High School.

Teams of 15 to 20 people from local businesses, churches, service groups and families will take turns walking, running or jogging around the track at the high school. The event includes a "Victory Lap" where cancer survivors are celebrated, a lunary ceremony in the evening to honor victims and survivors, and there is camping, food, and entertainment throughout the 24-hour program.

The Livonia Wal-Mart is participating in the event by sponsoring a team of participants. To become a member contact team captain Karen at (734) 624-0577.

For information about breast cancer research, fund-raising and volunteer opportunities or support visit these Web sites: Susan G. Komen Foundation Web site at www.komen.org the Barbara Ann Karmanos Cancer Institute at www.karmanos.org or the American Cancer Society at www.cancer.org

Mammogram reporting improved for patients

What do the results of your mammogram really mean? It can be agonizing waiting for the results of your mammogram, and once you get them they can be confusing. A new requirement regarding direct reporting to the patient may help to ease the process.

As of April 28, 1999, the Mam-

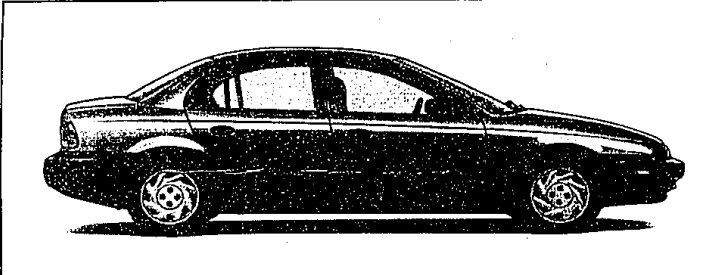
mography Quality Standards Act (MQSA), includes "a summary of written (mammography) report shall be sent to the patient by the interpreting physician in terms easily understood by a lay person." The amendment to the MQSA applies to every patient who receives a mammogram. "We are very excited to offer

this service to our patients," said Sandy Ziaja, product line manager, Oakwood Breast Care Center. "It will certainly help them to understand and feel more comfortable with their results."

Physicians are also pleased with the new direct reporting requirement. "We've shared samples of the letters with our

referring physicians," said Ziaja. "They see it as a great way to improve communication with their patients and since the letter is in language that is easy to understand, the physicians feel it will help to put the patient more at ease."

Any summary that is sent with abnormal results will also include clear direction about the appropriate next steps to be taken. Results that are abnormal may be conveyed by a phone call, which will be followed by the summary letter. The referring physicians will receive an official interpretation of the results prior to the letter being sent to the patient.



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