

Cancer Prevention and Control Program

On June 1, 2010, a 52-year-old woman named Maria* went to her local laundromat. She notices a flyer on the bulletin board about “Take Charge!,” the Oklahoma State Department of Health (OSDH) Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. The flyer explains that the program provides free Pap tests, clinical breast exams, and mammograms.

Maria knows she needs these exams. She doesn’t have health insurance, so she decides to call the number on the flyer. A Patient Navigator (PN) determines Maria meets the eligibility requirements for the Take Charge! Program since she is uninsured, between 50- to 64-years-old, and her income is in the eligible range of at or below 185 percent of the federal poverty level. The PN finds services close to Maria’s home and work at the OSU Women’s Center (a provider for the Take Charge! Program) and sets up an appointment. The PN also tells Maria that she is eligible for a free colonoscopy and refers her to the OSU Department of Surgery for consultation.

On June 9, Maria goes to her appointment for the Pap test, clinical breast exam and mammogram. While there, the physician shows her how to perform monthly self breast exams. Maria is told that the results for her Pap test and mammogram will be available in about two weeks.

The next day, Maria goes to her colonoscopy consultation appointment. Her physician explains that the purpose of a screening is to look for cancer or polyps to prevent the development of colorectal cancer. He also tells her what to expect and gives instructions on how to prepare for the exam. Maria is assured that if any problem is found, the physician and facility will work to secure her treatment.

On June 15, Maria receives a colonoscopy, which reveals a few polyps and diverticulitis. During the procedure, the polyps are removed. The physician gives Maria instructions on how to change her diet to prevent polyps and schedules a colonoscopy for the following year.

On June 16, Maria receives a call from the OSU Women’s Center requesting that she return to discuss the results of her mammogram. A few days later, Maria meets with her physician who explains that her results were abnormal and that additional diagnostic tests are needed. The physician helps Maria complete an application for the Oklahoma Cares Program. If she qualifies, this program will pay for the additional tests and/or treatment, as well as provide full Medicaid benefits.

On June 30, Maria is notified that she has qualified for Oklahoma Cares and receives a SoonerCare (Medicaid) card. As part of this program, an Oklahoma Health Care Authority (OHCA) nurse case manager is assigned to help ensure Maria receives further diagnostic and/or treatment services.

The OHCA case manager refers Maria back to the OSU Women’s Center (a SoonerCare provider) for further diagnostic tests. During testing, a radiologist identifies areas of



Patients are taught how to perform self breast exams.



concern and recommends an ultrasound-guided biopsy be performed at the same visit. Maria complies and within 24 hours, results are confirmed positive for breast cancer.

On June 29, Maria begins her cancer treatment including surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation. Once she finishes the treatment, Maria will be offered reconstruction, which is also provided by SoonerCare.

As is customary, Maria's healthcare providers will report findings, treatment, and outcomes to the OSDH Central Cancer Registry. The OSDH Comprehensive Cancer Control Program will use this data to improve cancer prevention, control, treatment, and survivorship for Oklahomans through the implementation of the Oklahoma Cancer Plan.

But the most important part of this story is that Maria's decision to call the Take Charge! phone number she found on her laundromat's bulletin board may have saved her life.

- Services provided > by the Cancer Prevention and Control Program
- Pap test, clinical breast exam, mammogram, and education on self breast exams
 - Colonoscopy
 - Patient navigation services for help in accessing care
 - Assistance in obtaining cancer treatment including surgery, chemotherapy, and radiation (if ineligible for Oklahoma Cares)
 - Information collection, database entry, and evaluation

*name has been changed



Oklahoma State
Department of Health

Terry L. Cline, PhD
Commissioner

Chronic Disease Service
405.271.4072
www.health.ok.gov