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## **EARLY CERVICAL CANCER DETECTION SAVES LIVES**

### **Local health officials urge all women to protect themselves by getting a Pap exam**

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) is encouraging women to get a Pap test to detect cervical abnormalities that may lead to cancer.

“Our goal is to prevent women from dying from cervical cancer,” said Commissioner of Health, Bevan K. Baker. “We are asking all women to see their physician or make an appointment at our South Side Health Center to receive this important test.”

Cervical cancer was once one of the most common causes of cancer death for women in the United States. However, early detection has enabled doctors to find changes in the cervix before cancer develops, allowing them to treat the disease when it is most curable.

According to the latest state Department of Health Services statistics, only 52% of all cervical cancers in Wisconsin were diagnosed at an early stage, which suggests that many women are not getting regular screening for this largely preventable and treatable disease.

Through State-sponsored funding and a partnership with Milwaukee Health Services, Inc., MHD’s Milwaukee Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (MBCCAP) offers free cervical cancer screening tests to eligible, uninsured, low-income women aged 35-64. The program also provides outreach to educate women about cervical cancer prevention, and case management to assure important follow-up contact. If a woman tested through these services is found to have cervical cancer, she may be eligible for the Well Woman Medicaid treatment component to pay for cancer treatment.

In 2008, MBCCAP provided over 600 Pap tests to eligible women. The program serves as a vital safety net to help fill the gap for uninsured women, reaches out to find women who have never or rarely been screened for cervical cancer, and spreads the message that regular Pap test screening is key to early detection and increased survival.

In addition to regular Pap testing, women between the ages of 11 and 26 may want to discuss the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine with their health care provider since the vaccine helps prevent the disease which causes most cervical cancer.

For information on eligibility and how to access this service, visit the City of Milwaukee Health Department's website: [www.milwaukee.gov/BreastandCervicalCan23789.htm](http://www.milwaukee.gov/BreastandCervicalCan23789.htm)

For more information about cervical cancer in women, visit the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program at: [www.cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp](http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp)