

Op-Ed: *Making Every Day a Crucial Time to “Catch” Cancer Early in [Insert State/County]*

There are many sports throughout the nation that families are passionate about including football (NFL-National Football League), baseball (MLB-Major League Baseball), basketball (NBA-National Basketball Association), hockey (NHL-National Hockey League), and perhaps auto racing (NASCAR). And a common factor in sports and life is “the battle to win and overcome the odds”. This perspective remains true even when applied to the cancer journey and loved ones affected by this medical condition.

According to the American Cancer Society’s most recent reports, approximately 290,560 women will be newly diagnosed with breast cancer this year alone.¹ In our state or county____ [may insert state or county-level female **breast cancer** incidence (new cases), prevalence and/or hospitalization rates **overall** and then stratify data by age group, health insurance status and race/ethnicity (if data is available)]

The combination of factors that contribute to geographic disparities in cancer incidence (new cases) and mortality include variations in risk factors as well as access to screening and treatment, which are influenced by socioeconomic status (lower levels of income, education, inadequate healthcare insurance coverage), policies, as well as distance to screening and other medical support services. Reports indicate that only 37% of uninsured women were up to date with breast cancer screening, compared to 70% of privately insured women nationwide.²

On today and every day, our organization supports the National Football League (NFL) and American Cancer Society’s “Crucial Catch” campaign shared message “We see you. We see a future where no one fights alone.”³ The battle against cancer entails intercepting cancer by increasing access to routine cancer screening and early detection services among uninsured and underinsured populations, populations with a family history of cancer as well as residents of medically underserved areas (MUAs) and healthcare professional shortage areas located in rural, metropolitan, and Native American communities.⁴

According to the American Cancer Society’s most recent reports, approximately 43,780 women will lose their lives due to female breast cancer this year alone.⁵ [may insert state or county-level female **breast cancer** mortality rates overall and then stratify data by age group, health insurance status and race/ethnicity (if data is available) OR compare to the national average-mortality rate]

During this Breast Cancer Awareness month and throughout the year, we support the Crucial Catch campaign motto “It takes all of us to intercept cancer.”⁶

An interception on cancer can occur early across the lifespan and along the cancer control continuum beginning with prevention, screening, and early detection, to diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship.⁷

An interception on cancer entails increasing access to cancer prevention resources, awareness, education, and affordable treatment among all populations including populations and low-income or low-resourced communities considered at higher risk for developing some forms of cancer.⁸

An interception on cancer may involve the promotion of free services provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP) that provides breast and cervical cancer screenings as well as diagnostic services to low-income women, as well as women who are uninsured or underinsured (health insurance does not cover cancer screening exams) in every state throughout the year.⁹

SelfMade Health Network (SMHN)-CDC National Network (Cancer and Tobacco-related Disparities)
Op-Ed Template for NCCPs/Partners/Grantees- Breast Cancer Awareness Month (October 2022)

An interception on cancer may involve collaborating or partnering with companies, organizations, and community stakeholders to identify and eliminate barriers such as: limited transportation and out-of-pocket costs (medication, etc.) associated with delayed screening, diagnosis and treatment including among low-income populations. Visit <https://www.nfl.com/causes/crucial-catch/> or Text “CATCH” to 635635 to find local cancer screening resources (including transportation support).

Also, cancer interception may involve ensuring that communities, small businesses, and employers educate residents, and employees (including full-time minimum wage workers, part-time, contractual, seasonal, and temporary) about the National Cancer Institute’s directory of more than 100 organizations nationwide that provide free cancer support services for cancer survivors throughout the year.¹⁰ To intercept cancer in [name of state, county/parish, multi-county region], we are [insert 1-3 examples of state, county or local-level programmatic strategies, partnerships, collaborations, policy-related initiatives, health system interventions, community engagement activities and/or social media campaigns implemented or planned to support Breast Cancer Awareness Month]

The effects of cancer vary throughout our state.¹¹ We hope that you join us in making every day a crucial time to “catch” cancer early and reduce late-stage or advanced cancer. And like favorite sports, we hope all communities can make cancer screening a family affair. **#ItTakesAllOfUs #CrucialCatch**

References:

1. American Cancer Society (ACS) Cancer Statistics Center (2022) at: <https://cancerstatisticscenter.cancer.org/#!/cancer-site/Breast>
2. American Cancer Society. Breast Cancer Facts & Figures 2022-2024. Atlanta: American Cancer Society, Inc. 2022.
3. NFL and ACS Launch New Cancer Screening Platform as Part of Crucial Catch Initiative <https://operations.nfl.com/updates/football-ops/nfl-and-acg-launch-new-cancer-screening-platform-as-part-of-crucial-catch-initiative/>
4. SelfMade Health Network Determinants of Health Fact Sheet Series: Breast Cancer and Financial Barriers Fact Sheet at: <https://selfmadehealth.org/educate/determinants-of-health-fact-sheets/>
5. American Cancer Society (ACS) Cancer Statistics Center (2022) at: <https://cancerstatisticscenter.cancer.org/#!/cancer-site/Breast>
6. National Football Leagues (NFL) “Crucial Catch Intercept Cancer” at: [NFL Crucial Catch | NFL.com](https://www.nfl.com/crucial-catch)
7. National Cancer Institute (NCI): Cancer Control Continuum <https://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/about-dccps/about-cc/cancer-control-continuum>
8. SelfMade Health Network (SMHN) Tennessee Multi-Regional Community Engagement and Outreach Plan (Breast Cancer Prevention and Survivorship) <https://selfmadehealth.org/mobilize/guidance-documents/>
9. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP) at: <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp/screenings.htm>
10. National Cancer Institute (NCI) Cancer Support Services Directory at: <https://supportorgs.cancer.gov/home.aspx?js=1>
11. U.S. Cancer Statistics Working Group. U.S. Cancer Statistics Data Visualizations Tool, based on 2021 submission data (1999–2019): U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and National Cancer Institute; www.cdc.gov/cancer/dataviz, June 2022.

SelfMade Health Network (SMHN)-CDC National Network (Cancer and Tobacco-related Disparities)
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Additional Resource:

Affordable Care Act (ACA)-Preventive Care Benefits for Women at:
<https://www.healthcare.gov/preventive-care-women/>