

THINK PINK

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

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Lake Okeechobee
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If they did not meet the need, who would?

Professionals for the Cure was created to bridge the gap in care

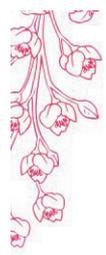
Breaking down breast cancer surgeries

This rundown can help people understand their various surgical options

What are clinical trials?

Dispelling myths and offering information on these research studies

If they did not meet the need, who would?



PROFESSIONALS FOR THE CURE



Professionals for the Cure was created to bridge the gap in care for patients in need.

By Cathy Womble
Lake Okeechobee News

Nathalie Grant worked for Florida Community Health Center as a nurse practitioner for about eight years and one of the things she noticed among her female patients was that when she told some of her them they needed a mammogram or a follow up to a mammogram, they would just look at her and say, "I can't afford to do that." Before long, she decided to do something about it and with help from some others in the community, created a non-profit to try to fill the gap for these women.

Professionals for the Cure not only helps women get mammograms but also helps them if their mammogram is abnormal and they need further testing. They arrange to have a mammogram bus come to Okeechobee on a regular basis. Some women qualify for free mammograms already. If they do not, Professionals for the Cure pays for their

mammograms. When the mammogram bus comes, any woman over the age of 50 without insurance is welcome to come for a mammogram, she said. She was not sure exactly how many they normally see when the bus comes but said they try not to turn anyone away.

One of the other things Professionals for the Cure does is to go out into the community and talk about breast health and women's health issues, doing community education. They do this in any area of Okeechobee County where women do not have access to this information already, areas where women are less likely to visit doctors regularly, less likely to have regular mammograms.

At this time, there are six medical professionals on the board, and she hopes to recruit two more soon. Most of them are in the nursing field, because she said they are the ones who see the need every day. "We see the need in the community and if nobody steps up, who is going to do it?"

The group does fundraisers to help finance this. One of their most recent fundraisers was called Denim and Diamonds which was a dinner and auction out at the Eagles Club.

On Oct.16, the group will be holding a Breast Cancer Awareness Costume Dance as a fundraising event. There will be a prize for the best homemade decorated bra. The dance will be held at the Okeechobee KOA from 6-10 p.m., and admission will be \$30 per person. Your ticket includes games, dinner, live

entertainment, prizes and surprises. Call 863-697-9669 for tickets or more information.

Anyone interested in donating to the non-profit can contact them through their Facebook page or at the number given.



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Breaking down breast cancer surgeries

Doctors will discuss a host of treatment options upon diagnosing a patient with breast cancer. The course of treatment is ultimately determined by various factors, including the stage of the disease at the time of diagnosis.

Doctors and patients now have more treatment options than ever before, and many women confronting breast cancer will undergo a combination of treatments en route to beating their disease.

The National Breast Cancer Foundation, Inc.® reports that surgery is the most common form of treatment for breast cancer. Surgical procedures vary, and the following rundown can help women understand their options.



Lumpectomy

The NBCF notes that a lumpectomy procedure typically removes the least amount of breast tissue necessary to get the tumor out. Surgeons also will remove a small amount or margin of surrounding tissue, but not the breast. The American Cancer Society notes that a lumpectomy is classified as a breast-conserving surgery. The NBCF describes a lumpectomy as the least invasive breast cancer surgery and notes that the procedure is highly effective.

Mastectomy

Surgeons remove the entire breast during a mastectomy. The online medical resource Verywell Health notes that there are reasons for and against getting a double mastectomy, and some women who must have one breast removed also have the other healthy breast removed. There are various types of mastectomies, including skin-sparing mastectomy, simple mastectomy, modified radical mastectomy, and partial mastectomy. Each type is different, and what's recommended to one patient may not be recommended to another. Doctors who recommend mastectomy can break down each option so patients can make the most informed decision possible.

Additional procedures

Doctors may need to perform some additional procedures after breast cancer patients undergo a lumpectomy or mastectomy. In such instances, doctors may remove and examine lymph nodes to determine if the cancer has spread and to what extent it has spread. The NBCF notes that a sentinel lymph node biopsy is performed so doctors can examine the lymph node closest to the tumor, as this is where cancer cells are most likely to have spread. Identifying the sentinel lymph node involves injecting dye or radioactive substances into the tissue. The lymph nodes that are most susceptible to cancer will be marked by the dye or substances injected. Doctors may perform an axillary

node dissection, which involves the removal of the axillary lymph nodes located in the underarm. Lymph nodes do not always need to be removed, but doctors will often conduct a sentinel node biopsy or an axillary node dissection when performing a lumpectomy or mastectomy.

Surgery is the most common treatment for breast cancer. Women diagnosed with breast cancer can discuss the pros and cons of common surgeries as they begin their fight against their disease.

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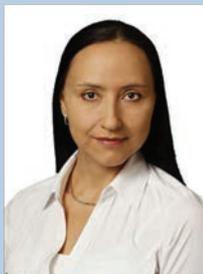
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Hendry Regional Medical Center hosts 5th Annual Pink Warriors Walk



CLEWISTON – Hendry Regional Medical Center (HRMC) is hosting the 5th annual **Pink Warriors Walk**. The 5k walk is on Saturday, October 23 at Sugar Festival Field in Clewiston, and concludes with a delicious breakfast.

October is Breast Cancer Awareness and about 1 in 8 U.S. women will develop breast cancer over the course of her lifetime. As of January 2021, there were more than 3.8 million women with a history of breast cancer in the U.S. This includes women currently being treated and women who have finished treatment. Per 2018 data, 136 women per 100,000 females will be affected with breast cancer in Hendry County.

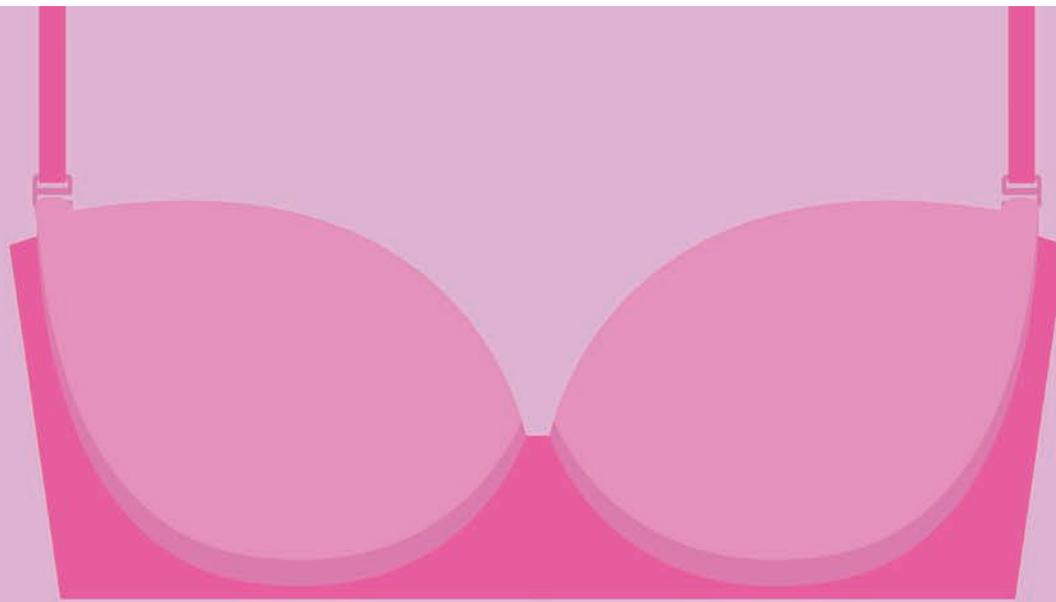
HRMC created the Pink Warriors to raise awareness of breast cancer as well as raise funds for the Pink Warriors Fund that would be utilized and stay with in our community. “We have had a tremendous response and outpouring from the community for our annual event, and we are able to raise critical dollars to help local women in their fight against breast cancer. We are looking forward to another successful fundraiser and hope to exceed last year’s fundraising,” stated R.D. Williams, CEO.

The Pink Warriors Walk traditionally raises over \$20,000 for the Pink Warriors Fund annually. In addition to the funds raised by the 5K walk other organizations from LaBelle, Moore Haven and Clewiston generously donate their fundraising efforts to be included, which allows HRMC to reach more women. Since its inception in 2017, through generous donors the Pink Warriors Walk has raised over **\$88,000!**

The Pink Warriors Fund can be used for any woman in need of a breast related screening or diagnostic imaging service provided by HRMC that is not covered by insurance. To utilize the fund the doctor writes “Pink Warrior Fund” on the prescription/order and the patient can make an appointment at a HRMC location in Clewiston or LaBelle.

To join the Pink Warriors Walk 2021 and raise funds for local women’s breast health or to learn more, text “PWW21” to 243-725.

About Hendry Regional Medical Center: Hendry Regional Medical Center is a 25-bed critical access hospital that incorporates modern technology with state-of-the-art medical staff to care for its patients. Hendry Regional Medical Center’s mission is “to excel in quality, compassion, and innovation to make our community healthier.”



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How breast cancer treatments can affect the immune system

Treatment for breast cancer is highly effective. Five-year survival rates for breast cancer have increased dramatically in recent decades, and much of that success can be credited to cancer researchers and campaigns designed to inform women about the importance of screenings.

Breast cancer is highly treatable, but treatment typically leads to some unwanted side effects. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, women undergoing treatment for breast cancer may experience a host of side effects,

including fatigue, pain, headaches, and dental issues. Cancer treatments, most notably chemotherapy, also can take a toll on women's immune systems.

Why does chemotherapy affect the immune system?

Cancer is caused by an uncontrolled division of abnormal cells in the body. According to Breastcancer.org, chemotherapy targets these abnormal cells, but also can affect fast-growing cells that are healthy and normal.

So chemotherapy can damage cells throughout the body, including those in bone marrow. When bone marrow is damaged, it's less capable of producing sufficient red blood cells, white blood cells and platelets. Breastcancer.org notes that the body is more vulnerable to infection when it does not have enough white blood cells.

Does chemotherapy always weaken the immune system?

The effects of chemotherapy on the immune system depend on various factors. According to Breastcancer.org, a patient's age and overall health may influence the effects of chemotherapy on their immune systems. Young, healthy patients may be less vulnerable

to infections from weakened immune systems than aging, less healthy patients.

However, Susan G. Komen notes that the median age for breast cancer diagnosis in the United States is 63, so many patients are likely to be affected by the impact that treatment can have on their immune systems. The length of treatment and amount of medicines patients receive also can affect the impact of chemotherapy on patients' immune systems. Breastcancer.org notes that being administered two or more chemotherapy medicines at once is more likely to affect the immune system than just one medication.

Other treatments

Chemotherapy is not the only treatment that can affect breast cancer patients' immune systems. The Cancer Treatment Centers of America® notes that surgery, radiation, CAR T-cell therapy, stem cell transplants, and even immunotherapy can affect the immune system. Surgery can overtax the immune system and compromise its ability to prevent infections and heal wounds caused by the procedure. Like chemotherapy, radiation therapy can damage healthy cells and lead to an increased risk of infection. And while immunotherapy is designed to boost the immune system by helping it recognize and attack cells more effectively, it also can lead to an overactive immune system that attacks healthy cells.

Cancer treatment is often highly effective. However, patients may need to work with their physicians to combat treatment side effects that can adversely affect their immune systems.



What are clinical trials?

Breast cancer treatments are highly effective, which is one reason why the National Cancer Institute can report that the five-year survival rate for non-metastatic breast cancer is 90 percent. However, in certain situations, doctors may feel that the existing standard for breast cancer treatment may not be enough to help women overcome their disease. In such instances, doctors may discuss clinical trials with women battling breast cancer. The American Cancer Society defines clinical trials as research studies in which people volunteer to help doctors find ways to prevent or treat disease.

The National Breast Cancer Foundation, Inc.® points out that all current standards of treatment began as clinical trials. However, that does not mean women diagnosed with breast cancer should automatically sign up to participate in clinical trials. There are pros and cons to participating in clinical trials, and breast cancer patients can speak with their medical teams about the advantages and disadvantages of each trial they're considering. One myth worth dispelling is that clinical trials are only an option for people who have been diagnosed with advanced stage cancer. In fact, the NCI notes that clinical trials are available for all stages of cancer. A database of NCI-supported clinical trials can be found at cancer.gov/about-cancer/treatment/clinical-trials/search.

In honor of those who have fought this battle and in memory of those we have lost.

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Support groups and resources for breast cancer patients

A strong support network can help breast cancer patients navigate their treatments and all of the uncertainty that can arise after a cancer diagnosis. Many women undergoing treatment for breast cancer lean on friends and family for everything from emotional support to help with household tasks and much more. Though family and friends are often invaluable to women during their battles with breast cancer, sometimes a little support from women going through the same ups and downs can be just what patients need to stay the course and overcome their disease.

According to the World Cancer Research Fund, breast cancer is the most common cancer in women across the globe. The WCRF estimates that breast cancer accounts for roughly 25 percent of all cancers in women. The World Health Organization reports that 2.3 million women were diagnosed with breast cancer in 2020. Those figures are significant, but it's important that women recognize that five-year survival rates have improved dramatically in recent decades. In fact, the American Cancer Society notes that the five-year survival rate for localized breast cancers is 99 percent, while the rate for breast

cancers that has spread outside the breast to nearby structures or lymph nodes is 86 percent.

Rising survival rates for breast cancer mean that millions of women across the globe have already survived the disease, and many such women play vital roles in support groups that help women every day.

CancerCare® is a national organization in the United States that is dedicated to providing free, professional support services to anyone affected by cancer. All CancerCare® services are provided by oncology social workers and renowned cancer experts. The following are just a few of the support groups cancer patients can access through www.cancercares.org.

- **Breast Cancer Patient Support Group:** This free, 15-week online support group is for people diagnosed with breast cancer who are currently receiving treatment. Access the group at cancercares.org/support_groups/43-breast_cancer_patient_support_group.

- **African American Triple Negative Breast Cancer Patient Support Group:** This group is for African Americans diagnosed with triple negative breast cancer who are

currently receiving treatment. The group is free and continues for 15 weeks.

Access the group at cancercares.org/support_groups/197-african_american_triple_negative_breast_cancer_patient_support_group.

- **Metastatic Breast Cancer Patient Support Group:** This free, 15-week support group is for people diagnosed with stage IV metastatic breast cancer who are currently receiving treatment. Access the group at cancercares.org/support_groups/44-metastatic_breast_cancer_patient_support_group.

- **Breast Cancer Post-Treatment Survivorship Support Group:** Patients who have completed their breast cancer treatment within the

past 18 months are eligible for this free, 15-week support group. Access the group at https://www.cancercares.org/support_groups/180-breast_cancer_post-treatment_survivorship_support_group.

Each CancerCare® online support group is available exclusively to residents of the United States, including people in Puerto Rico and U.S. territories. The Canadian Cancer Society has a database that cancer patients in Canada can use to find local support services in their area. That can be accessed via the CCS Community Services Locator at csl.cancer.ca.

Support groups can be invaluable resources for women as they navigate breast cancer treatment.

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