

# Office of the Governor

PO BOX 004  
TRENTON, NJ 08625

## NEWS RELEASE

CONTACT: Steffanie Bell  
609-777-2600

RELEASE: October 8, 1999

### **Governor's Weekly Radio Address Discusses Breast Cancer**

Gov. Christie Whitman provides a weekly radio message to radio stations throughout the state. Each week, the message focuses on a different concern or event of interest to New Jerseyans.

This week's message highlights the Governor's proclamation of October as "Breast Cancer Awareness Month" and New Jersey's efforts in the fight against breast cancer. She also makes available two important toll-free phone numbers for listeners: to encourage screening and to get information on a treatment trial being offered at more than 30 New Jersey hospitals.

The American Cancer Society estimates that one in eight women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer sometime in her life. Every year, breast cancer is detected in about 6,000 women in New Jersey.

Attached is a text of the message.

The radio message can be accessed by calling the Governor's actuality line at 609-292-3249. It will be available today, beginning at noon, and will run through the weekend.

#### RADIO ADDRESS BREAST CANCER

Cancer kills. This year, breast cancer will take the lives of about 1,500 women in our state.

Hello, this is Governor Christie Whitman with a message about breast cancer. And I have some important telephone numbers to give you today, so you may want to grab a pen and paper.

The American Cancer Society estimates that one in eight women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer sometime in her life. In fact, every year, breast cancer is detected in about 6,000 women in New Jersey.

Those of us who have seen friends and family members battle cancer know that even one case of cancer is one too many.

Survival rates for breast cancer have increased in recent years, which is probably because more women are getting mammograms

and breast exams. Unfortunately, the increase has been much less pronounced among African-American women.

We can and we must do more. It's so important to detect breast cancer early. The earlier it's discovered the better the chances for successful treatment. Early detection is vital, since 70 percent of women diagnosed with breast cancer have no known risk factors.

As you know, I have proclaimed October "Breast Cancer Awareness Month" in New Jersey, and it's my hope that we will use this month to take new steps in our battle against breast cancer.

What steps? Well, all women - especially those of us age 40 and older - should get a breast screening every year. Regrettably, a 1995 New Jersey study reported that while 78 percent of women 40 and over had a mammogram, 22 percent had never had one.

Mammograms can play a major role in detecting breast cancer, and can detect cancer as much as two years before you or your doctor can feel it. If you think you can't afford a mammogram, the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services offers low-cost screening. For more information on this program, or to find out whether you qualify, you can call 1-800-328-3838. That's 1-800-328-3838.

I also encourage every woman to perform a self-exam once a month and get a clinical exam by a doctor or nurse once a year.

We are also taking some collective steps as a state to fight against breast cancer. For example, in 1995, I signed legislation that created a New Jersey income tax check-off box dedicated to breast cancer research. We raised more than \$875,000 through this program.

We are also devoting \$2.7 million from last year's tobacco settlement for cancer research and prevention activities. A large portion of this funding will allow us to expand breast cancer outreach and education programs.

Since 1993, we've offered a statewide screening program for breast and cervical cancer for women. This program has screened nearly 16,000 women who met the eligibility criteria.

On other fronts, New Jersey scientists are studying how environmental factors increase a woman's risk for breast cancer, what cancer drugs work best, and how to help women deal with the psychological and quality-of-life issues that can come with a breast cancer diagnosis.

Our New Jersey pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies are developing 14 new and promising drugs for breast cancer - more than any other state in the country.

And more than 30 New Jersey hospitals are offering women an opportunity to participate in the new National Cancer Institute breast cancer prevention trial named STAR. This study will compare the treatment results from two established drugs to see which might help prevent cancer better. If you would like more information on STAR, you can call 609-633-6552. That's 609-633-6552.

Obviously, we are fighting the battle against breast cancer on many fronts, but we won't stop attacking the problem until we've won.

I am hopeful that the kind of research, screening, and outreach, and education efforts going on around our state will, one day, mean a healthier, cancer-free New Jersey.

Thank you.

