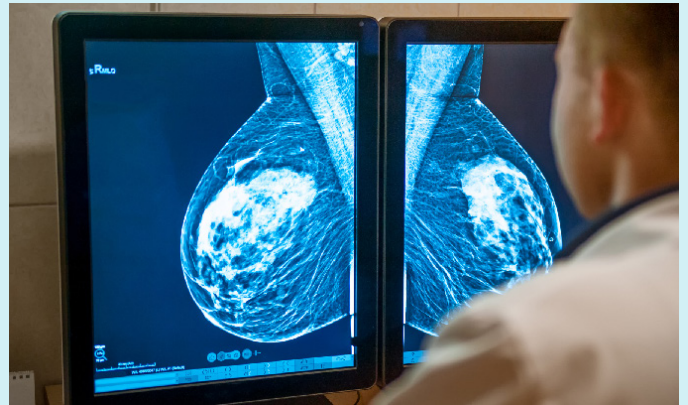


Sunrise's Pink and Pearls Ties Lung and Breast Screening Together to Increase Uptake

BACKGROUND

Breast cancer is the second most commonly diagnosed cancer in Nevada. In 2024, the American Cancer Society estimated about 2,880 Nevadans would be diagnosed with breast cancer and 430 will die of the disease. Additionally, lung cancer is the second most commonly diagnosed cancer among women in Nevada.

An estimated 2,110 Nevadans will be diagnosed with lung cancer and 1,050 will die of the disease in 2024. Though many cases of lung cancer are preventable, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there are risk factors for breast cancer that can't be prevented. Risk factors include age — breast cancer is often diagnosed after age 50 — genetic mutations, personal history of breast cancer, and previous treatments using radiation therapy. It's essential for women at average risk to begin annual mammograms at age 40.



Physician reviewing a mammogram.

“Anyone can be diagnosed with breast cancer, even men.”

CHALLENGE

The biggest risk for getting breast cancer is having breasts. Anyone can be diagnosed with breast cancer, even men. A common misconception is that you need a doctor's referral to get a mammogram. That's false. If you're 40 or older, you can schedule a mammogram without a referral. However, this isn't the case with lung cancer screening.

To be screened for lung cancer, individuals must meet more detailed eligibility criteria and get a referral from their primary care doctor. Because women often skip the primary care referral process, they're never evaluated to see if they are eligible for lung cancer screening as well.

OPPORTUNITY

Kim Dupuis, Oncology Development Director for Sunrise Hospital and Medical Center in Las Vegas, said that “statistically women are more likely to get screened if they understand that they qualify.” But to educate women about lung cancer screening, she'd need to find a way to connect with them. Dupuis came across the Pink & Pearls concept being used by health systems on the East Coast. The color pink is associated with breast cancer awareness and pearl represents the white associated with lung cancer awareness. By combining awareness for both breast and lung cancer, Dupuis said it's an opportunity to encourage women to get screened for both at the same time. She could use the concept across October and November, stretching screening promotion longer.



ACTIVITY

Dupuis adopted the Pink & Pearls campaign at Sunrise Hospital and focused on creating activities to promote the screenings together, such as at health fairs with employer groups. Education tables were set up in the hospital lobby to promote breast and lung cancer awareness. At these health fairs, individuals can check their eligibility for a mammogram and be booked for an appointment on-site.



Inflatable lungs at a Pink and Pearls event at Sunrise Hospital.

Lung cancer pre-screening is also available to determine a person's eligibility and request a referral for lung cancer screening from the patient's primary care doctor. Patients receive follow-up throughout the process. Sunrise Hospital partnered with the GO2 Lung Cancer Foundation, the American Lung Association, Genentech and the Nevada Cancer Coalition on these outreach events. Nevada Cancer Coalition provided giant inflatable lungs at some events to draw attention and educate attendees.

“I get the chills when things connect. This is why we're here.”

OUTCOME

Sunrise Hospital hosted seven health fair events in September and October 2023 with additional in-hospital outreach in November. Hospital staff had close to 300 discussions about screenings across all of the events.

Seventy-three mammograms were scheduled on the spot and 61 were completed. One person was referred for high-risk/under 40 screening and two were referred for an immediate visit to a surgeon.

Fourteen people were eligible for lung screening and eight lung cancer screenings were completed. Six patients were unable to get screened because authorization was not provided by their primary care physician.

Dupuis said one event was set up near a Starbucks in the hospital and two people in line for coffee found out they qualified for lung cancer screening — and they were unaware of the screening. Throughout a hospital lobby event, 17 employees also signed up for mammograms. After finding out these results, Dupuis expressed, “I get the chills when things connect. This is why we're here.”

TOOLS FOR SUCCESS

Hosting an outreach event to educate on lung screening and review people's eligibility can be a great way to increase lung cancer screening rates, especially among those who are unaware of the availability of effective screening. Many people are unfamiliar with their “pack year history” and calculating that number can be a challenge. Have tools on hand to help determine eligibility for lung screening, including a Pack Year Calculator tool. Find one at the link below.



<https://www.mdcalc.com/calc/10187/pack-years-calculator>