



Press Release
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Willapa Harbor Hospital Observes Breast Cancer Awareness Month

The local medical center urges women to talk with their medical providers about screening options.

SOUTH BEND, Wash. (Sept. 22, 2020) –The nation is gearing up for Breast Cancer Awareness Month, an initiative that occurs each October to start a conversation about breast cancer and screening. Locally, Willapa Harbor Hospital is joining the campaign by getting the conversation going here at home.

“Until researchers find a way to stop breast cancer, it is up to us as a community to raise awareness and discuss the importance of mammograms and other breast cancer screening methods,” explains Dr. Tobi Thaller, Family Medicine physician in South Bend. “Having access to mammography services year-round here at Willapa Harbor Hospital is quite a blessing. Many rural communities in Washington and across the nation do not have access to a permanent scanner, so we are very fortunate to have this convenience.”

Breast cancer is a malignant tumor that develops from breast tissue. Aside from early detection through screenings such as mammograms, the first noticeable symptom is typically a lump seen or felt in or around the breast.

In 2020 alone, it is estimated that 6,690 women in Washington will be diagnosed with breast cancer. Upwards of 900 women in the state are expected to die because of the disease.

The American Cancer Society recommends women between the ages of 40 and 44 should have the option to start screening with a mammogram every year. Women ages 45 to 54 should get a mammogram annually. Women 55 and older can switch to a mammogram every other year or maintain an annual screening.

According to Dr. Thaller, although there are many popular initiatives year-round to raise awareness of breast cancer, many women still do not follow recommended screening measures.

“Too often, women go through life without being screened for breast cancer. By the time it is discovered, it has already elevated to a high stage,” Dr. Thaller adds. “Making time to schedule a mammogram is one of the most important things you can do each year.”

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Medicare, Medicaid, and most private health plans cover all or part of breast cancer screenings. Women are urged to check with their medical insurance providers to learn more about coverage, but they should not delay having these essential screenings.

For more information about mammograms and other cancer screenings, talk with your primary care provider or call the Willapa Harbor Hospital imaging department at 360-875-4505.

About Willapa Harbor Hospital

Founded in 1954, Willapa Harbor Hospital serves the healthcare needs of north Pacific County residents. The hospital offers a wealth of medical services, including in-patient care, a Level V 24-hour trauma center, advanced radiology services (including CT, MRIs, ultrasound, and mammograms), an outpatient lab, surgical services, diabetic education, and more. Pacific Family Health Center and Willapa Harbor Hospital Clinic are medical clinics that are both operated by Willapa Harbor Hospital. For more information, please visit www.willapaharborhospital.com.

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