

## OUTCOME

Increased breast screening for women who have previously been underserved.



## Promising Practice Ideas— Breast Cancer Screening Advocates

### *Description*

Volunteer advocates from communities with low breast cancer screening rates are recruited and trained to help women access screening services.

### *Ingredients*

- Names of breast cancer survivors, caregivers, or any others with a passion to fight breast cancer.
- Community data on demographics and breast cancer screening.
- Paperwork to organize the project—advocate job description, a compelling recruitment letter, contact and screening information form, photo release form, advocate/community member tracking form.
- Educational materials—screening and breast health information, a powerpoint for presentations to potential advocates, and a community provider directory.

### *Preparation*

Step 1: Invite partnering agencies and individuals, such as local health care providers, community health leaders, and health-related agencies to form a Task Force to set goals and to meet monthly to review progress and make adjustments.

Step 2: Prepare administrative paperwork. For examples, see the resource section. Community contact forms should allow some degree of anonymity.

Step 3: Recruit a core group of volunteer advocates.

Step 4: Give volunteer advocates a short training session, present community data, and develop a plan with their input. The plan should include draft educational materials and an outline of ways to recruit additional volunteers and make community contacts. Help volunteer advocates set goals for the number of community contacts and the number of women to be screened.

Step 5: Provide volunteer advocates with “breast health kits” to give to their contacts with information about why screening is important, how to find a local health care provider, and how to pay for screening tests. Give advocates photos and information about Task Force members. Hold quarterly check-in meetings with volunteer advocates to provide support.

Step 6: Use the Every Woman Matters Encounter Registry to support data collection and follow-up.

Step 7: Hold a celebration and provide a reward to advocates who reach their goal for community contacts.

## Keys to Success

- Include women representative of the community as Task Force members and advocates. Obtain input from the community before rolling out programs and materials.
- Check in frequently with volunteer advocates. A “Project Team Captain” is needed to make monthly contacts, record community contact data, and report regularly to the Task Force.
- Community contacts should receive regular follow-up calls from volunteer advocates.
- Task Force sets short and long-term goals, action steps, and strategies, and documents progress.
- Task Force assigns tasks and coordinates support to avoid duplication and “dropped balls”. Meetings have open discussions on concerns, questions, and new perspectives.
- Outreach events held to reach community women.

## Summary

To increase breast cancer screening in underserved communities, form a Task Force of community leaders to design a program and set goals; and recruit volunteer advocates to contact women for screening education.

## Resources

Metro African American Breast Cancer Task Force: <http://www.bcpartnerships.net/goals/african-american-women/task-force-documents>

Guide to Community Preventive Services: <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/cancer/index.html>

## Tips

**Determine up front how the task force makes decisions—majority rules, consensus, or a combination.**

**Build an electronic library on disparities, strategies to overcome disparities, and community-tailored educational materials on breast screening.**

**Over-recruit advocates, knowing that life circumstances change and people may need to drop out.**

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