



**WOMEN'S WAY**  
a breast and cervical cancer  
early detection program

**July 2014 – December 2015  
Calendar**

This calendar is dedicated to each and every woman who is or has participated in *Women's Way* over the years. We applaud these women for taking charge of their health!

This calendar is also dedicated to the women of North Dakota who need and deserve regular screenings for breast and cervical cancer.

### **What is *Women's Way*?**

*Women's Way* is the North Dakota Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. The purpose of the program is to provide a 'good health opportunity' for eligible North Dakota women to obtain mammograms, Pap tests and other breast and cervical cancer screening and diagnostic services according to recommended breast and cervical cancer screening guidelines.

### **What services are available through *Women's Way*?**

Eligible women ages 40 through 64 can receive:

- Clinical breast exams
- Mammograms
- Pap tests
- Pelvic exams
- Most diagnostic tests if needed

### **Who qualifies for *Women's Way*?**

A woman who:

- Lives in North Dakota
- Is between ages 40 through 64
- Meets income guidelines
- Has insurance but cannot afford to pay deductible(s) or co-payments OR doesn't have insurance
- Is not enrolled in Medicaid, Medicaid Expansion, or Medicare Part B

## How does a woman enroll in *Women's Way*?

It's as easy as a phone call.

Call **1.800.449.6636** to reach a *Women's Way* local coordinator.

Call **1.800.280.5512** or **1.701.328.2306** to reach the *Women's Way* state office.

## Where does a woman go for screening services?

*Women's Way* clients usually are able to receive screening services through their regular health-care provider including doctors, nurse practitioners, and physician assistants. This is because most North Dakota health-care providers have signed up with the program to provide *Women's Way* clinical services.

## What happens if a woman is diagnosed with a breast or cervical cancer?

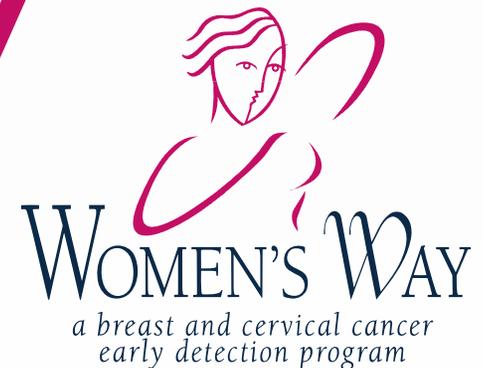
The woman is encouraged to work with the *Women's Way* local coordinator or state office staff to determine if treatment services would be available through Medicaid Expansion or the Medicaid – *Women's Way* Treatment Program.

## *Women's Way* History

In 1990, Congress passed the Breast and Cervical Cancer Mortality Prevention Act, which launched funding for the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. Each year, Congress appropriates funding to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to distribute the money and oversee the program. Today, in the United States, there are currently 66 funded states, tribes and territories providing services. Since 2007, the North Dakota State Legislature also provides funding.

The North Dakota program was named *Women's Way* and began offering screening services in September 1997. Since that time, nearly 14,000 North Dakota women have received screening services through *Women's Way*.

There is still much work to do because as many as 24,000 women in our state could be eligible.



**NORTH DAKOTA**  
DEPARTMENT of HEALTH



**“I feel I am part of the *Women’s Way* family. They are part of my life. It’s the support you feel when somebody’s got your back. You can sleep good.”**

**– Margarita Woodward, Bismarck, N.D.**

***Women’s Way* Enrollee  
and Breast Cancer Survivor**

### **Margarita’s Story**

**W**hen Margarita discovered a lump in her breast during a routine self-exam one morning in 2010, her first call was to work. “I knew I needed to take care of this,” she said. Margarita’s second call was to *Women’s Way* local coordinator, Theresa Schmidt. By the afternoon, Margarita went to the first of what would become a series of appointments.

Unsatisfied by one doctor’s advice to drink less coffee, consume more water and return in a year, Margarita again contacted Theresa to request a second opinion. She promptly scheduled another appointment. “I give my hand to this doctor and I say, ‘You don’t know me and I don’t know you, but I know

my body and this is not good.’”

Within days Margarita had a biopsy and other procedures. Doctors diagnosed her with an aggressive breast cancer. A lumpectomy, chemotherapy and radiation treatments were scheduled. Between Margarita’s insurance and *Women’s Way*, most medical expenses were covered.

Margarita, who was born in Peru and arrived in North Dakota in 2003, continues to participate in *Women’s Way* and remains faithful to regular screenings. She’s healthy and happy. She’s thrilled to spread the word about *Women’s Way* by translating information into her native language. 

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**Women's Way may provide a way to pay.**

**Make the call.**

Women's Way 1.800.449.6696 | 1.800.280.5512 | 701.328.2306



# August<sup>2014</sup>

**“I’m thankful for *Women’s Way* every day. If it wouldn’t have been for their help, I probably wouldn’t be here now.”**

**– Linda Appelt, Surrey, N.D.**

***Women’s Way* Enrollee  
and Cervical Cancer Survivor**



## **Linda’s Story**

Linda was divorced, without insurance and doing her darndest to make ends meet as a licensed childcare provider. “I took care of nine kids every day,” Linda said. “I ran after the kids day after day. I hardly ate and I kept gaining weight.”

It was the unexplained pounds – roughly 20 over four weeks – that got Linda’s attention. A neighbor suggested an upcoming free clinic through the First District Health Unit. There, Linda saw a doctor for the first time in 18 years. “Not only did I find out I had cervical cancer, I found out I had high blood

pressure and a thyroid problem,” Linda said. “I got whammied big time.” Once connected with the local *Women’s Way* coordinator, Linda had guidance securing Medicaid to help with treatment costs.

As the seven-year mark of being cancer-free approaches, Linda now spends her days helping prepare 200-plus meals for Meals on Wheels clients in greater Minot. She enjoys her position as head cook as well as the insurance that comes with the job, and she remains active in promoting *Women’s Way*. “They saved my life,” Linda said. 



# September <sup>2014</sup>

**“I want women to come in to get checked. This can save your life. What’s more valuable than your life?”**

**– Dawn McCarty, Jamestown, N.D.**

**Registered Mammographer,  
Jamestown Regional Medical Center**

## **Dawn’s Story**

**T**echnology has come a long way since Dawn performed her first mammogram 16 years ago. “I started when we used film screen,” she said. “Then we went digital and we thought, wow, that is pretty awesome.”

In 2013, 3D mammography came to Jamestown Regional Medical Center (JRMC). “It’s just amazing,” Dawn said. “We used to take four views and we’d get four images. Now, we take four views and we can get up to 400 images.”

Technology aside, it’s the combination of self-breast exams, clinical breast exams and annual mammography screenings that offer women the very best

chance of detection. “You can’t fix it, if you can’t find it,” said Dawn, who performs more than 2,000 mammograms annually. “It’s too important not to have this done. There are funds available to help cover the expense.”

“Everybody needs a little help now and again,” Dawn said. “That’s what programs like *Women’s Way* are for. Luckily those programs are out there.”

Dawn’s passion for early detection extends beyond JRMC. Personalized license plates read “MAMMO” on her truck. Dawn hopes the word triggers an appointment reminder for women who read it. 







**“Women’s Way works.  
It gives you that friendly reminder  
every year that it is time.”**

**– Janal Hoff, Rural Richardton, N.D.**

***Women’s Way Enrollee***

## **Janal’s Story**

**J**anal is most content on her family’s dairy farm, located five miles outside Richardton. “I’ve tried off the farm jobs, but I’d miss my kids and my cows too much,” she said.

Back in 2012, a robotic milking system came to the Hoff Dairy Farm. That investment means the dairy – one of 100 in the state – will operate into the future. “Milk prices basically determine how much money we make from year to year,” Janal explained.

With *Women’s Way* there are no fluctuations. Janal knows her annual breast

and cervical cancer screenings are covered no matter what. “You don’t worry about having enough money to pay for a mammogram or a Pap,” she said.

“I’ve had three of my classmates diagnosed with breast cancer already,” Janal said. “You wonder if you’re going to be next.”

For his part, husband Harvey is grateful. “If it wasn’t for *Women’s Way* it wouldn’t get done. She wouldn’t go. With *Women’s Way*, it’s a priority and it gets done.”

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**Regular mammograms and Pap tests can save your life.**

**Make the call.**

Women's Way 1.800.449.6696 | 1.800.280.5512 | 701.328.2306



# November <sup>2014</sup>

**“I can’t say enough about *Women’s Way*. They’re so resourceful. They are there to help you in any way.”**

**– Mary Braun and husband Matt  
Rural Wahpeton, N.D.**

***Women’s Way* Enrollee**



## **Mary’s Story**

**M**ary is not bashful about the importance of regular breast and cervical cancer screenings.

“I’ve been with *Women’s Way* for over 10 years,” Mary said. “I didn’t have insurance and it was time to have a mammogram. I called up *Women’s Way* and they took me in. ... If it wasn’t for *Women’s Way*, I probably would have never had a mammogram.”

Mary appreciates the peace of mind that comes with annual exams. She’s lost friends to breast and other cancers, and believes *Women’s Way* is a great

option for women who lack insurance or cannot afford deductibles. “It’s really the best thing for them, but I have one friend who is really stubborn,” Mary said. “She says, ‘I don’t want to find out. I don’t want to know.’ I have tried and tried with her.”

While Mary hasn’t quite given up on her friend, she and husband Matt have confidence that *Women’s Way* will keep Mary on track with annual screenings for years to come. “That’s why I think they should have it done, if not for themselves, for their loved ones,” Matt said. 

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**Peace of mind – priceless!**

**Make the call.**

Women's Way 1.800.449.6696 | 1.800.280.5512 | 701.328.2306



**“Women’s Way fills a niche that is large across North Dakota.”**

**– Jan Bury, Bismarck, N.D.**

**Physician, Mid Dakota Clinic Center for Women**



## **Jan’s Story**

A desire to deliver babies motivated Jan to pursue medicine. “I wanted to be involved in the beginning of life,” she said. Decades later, Jan still delivers babies but she also cares for women at all life stages.

Preventative health care has a huge impact on a woman’s well-being as well as that of her loved ones. “Breast and cervical cancer screenings are such an important part of how we take care of ourselves, and an important part of how we take care of our families by being well for them,” Jan said.

Life circumstances often bump screenings to the bottom of a woman’s to-do list. That reality is where *Women’s Way* with its low- or no-cost offerings makes an impact.

Jan encourages everyone to spread the word about *Women’s Way*. “Reach out to other women. If they aren’t clear on the reasons for screenings, educate them about the importance,” she said. “A lot of times those of us who do it all the time don’t realize what a hardship it might be for others.” ❏



**“I know women don’t like to ask for help. They’re the proud ones of the family. Ask. Be brave.”**

**– Judy Curry, Fargo, N.D.**

**Licensed Practical Nurse (LPN)  
Family HealthCare Center**



## **Judy’s Story**

Nurse Judy has heard every excuse in the book from female patients who avoid health screenings. “I’m too busy. We’ll do it next month. It’s not going to happen to me. I don’t have time.” To those and other reasons, Judy asks, “Are you going to have time for being sick?”

Breast and cervical cancer screenings are essential to maintaining women’s health. “I tell women it’s just like a car. If the tires are flat you’re going to change the tires,” Judy said. “You take your car in for oil changes. Your body cannot run if its parts aren’t working.”

A former restaurant cook, Judy entered nursing after her mother’s death from lung cancer in 1998. She joined the staff at Family HealthCare five years ago and currently serves as an in-house resource for *Women’s Way*. Many of the clinic’s clients are New Americans who are learning about mammograms, pelvic exams and Pap tests for the first time.

“*Women’s Way* is so needed,” Judy said. “Preventative care is expensive. ... You see people cry when you tell them, ‘We can get you help.’”

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**Do it so you can cry at your granddaughter's wedding.**

**Make the call.**

Women's Way 1.800.449.6696 | 1.800.280.5512 | 701.328.2306



# February<sup>2015</sup>



**“Call. *Women’s Way* will help you right away. They are fast. They are caring. They are kind. They make you feel comfortable.”**

**– Rita Hunte, Rural Cannon Ball, N.D.**

*Women’s Way* Enrollee

## **Rita’s Story**

**R**ita faithfully received annual breast and cervical cancer screenings thanks to *Women’s Way*. “I enrolled right away and stayed with it every year until 2005,” she said. Then, life’s busyness got the best of Rita, who was helping raise two of her six grandchildren.

Fast-forward to March 2014 when a nasty sore throat sent Rita to the Indian Health Service clinic in nearby Fort Yates. A sign on the waiting room wall reminded Rita about *Women’s Way*. She remembers thinking, “I need to get back into *Women’s Way*.”

A little paperwork later and Rita had lots of appointments, including a mammogram. “I thought maybe they’ll call next month,” she said. “Instead, they were calling me within days.”

Looking back, Rita realizes she put herself and her health on the back burner. “Don’t wait like I did,” she said. “Stay with the program. It’s a good feeling to take care of your health. It’s important, especially now more than ever.” 📄

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**Regular screenings are worth it.**

**Make the call.**

Women's Way 1.800.449.6696 | 1.800.280.5512 | 701.328.2306



**“We pride ourselves in this clinic on preventative care. That’s why we push Women’s Way so much. We always have.”**

**– Kristi Midgarden, Park River, N.D.**

**Physician, Midgarden Family Clinic  
and Breast Cancer Survivor**



### **Kristi’s Story**

Advocating for breast and cervical cancer screenings is nothing new for Kristi. However, Kristi’s mantra was recently reinforced by personal experience.

“I had a routine mammogram last May and was diagnosed with breast cancer,” Kristi said. “That’s just another reason why as long as I have breath I will tell women to get their mammograms.”

Screening mammograms – like the one Kristi had – pick up abnormalities long before a lump is easily felt. Her cancer was caught early and treated

quickly. “I’m feeling well,” Kristi said. “I was very blessed.”

Kristi and her staff of six care for nearly 4,000 people in the northern Red River Valley. Based on experience, Kristi says the most common barrier for health screenings is financial. “It’s almost always money.”

With *Women’s Way* there is little room for excuse. “It provides screening health care of women who wouldn’t be able to afford it,” Kristi said. “The paperwork has always been easy. Even people who have insurance are often helped by this program.”

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**Do it for your family. Do it for you.**

**Make the call.**

Women's Way 1.800.449.6696 | 1.800.280.5512 | 701.328.2306



# April<sup>2015</sup>



***“Women’s Way is the way to go. They give you one-on-one attention. You’re not another number.”***

**– Teresa Hannestad, at right, and sister Carol, West Fargo, N.D.**

***Women’s Way Enrollees***

## **Hannestad Sisters’ Story**

Carol has never been a fan of medical providers. “I don’t like doctors,” she said. “I don’t want to see a doctor unless I’m on the floor and they have to pick me up. I don’t like hospitals, either.”

The truth is Carol would have continued putting off consistent breast and cervical cancer screenings if it wasn’t for one of her five sisters. Teresa, who is three years younger, persuaded Carol to sign up for *Women’s Way* in early 2014. “I looked at Carol and said, ‘We need to go in and have this done,’” Teresa remembers. “I literally brought her in.” “Well, she didn’t drag me,” Carol countered.

The results for both women were normal; however, ironically their oldest sister was diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer not long afterward.

Watching a loved one undergo a double mastectomy and struggle with the side effects of chemotherapy is difficult. “It scared me,” Carol said. “I don’t know if I’m next. That’s all I can think about sometimes.”

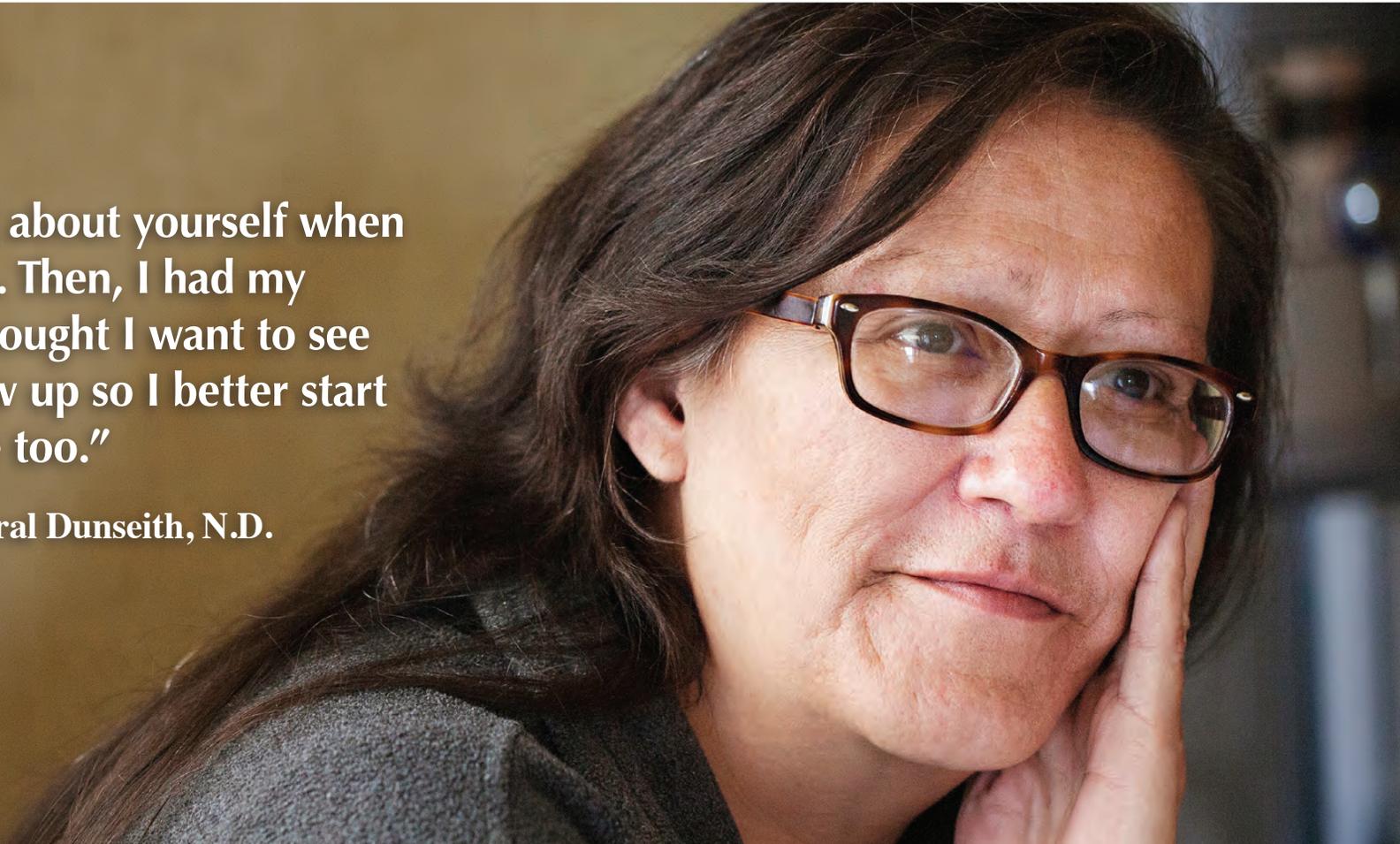
The once reluctant Carol now embraces regular screenings as a part of her future and will rely on *Women’s Way* to help pay. ■



**“You tend to forget about yourself when you’re raising kids. Then, I had my grandkids and I thought I want to see my grandkids grow up so I better start thinking about me too.”**

**– Lucinda Counts, Rural Dunseith, N.D.**

*Women’s Way Enrollee*



## **Lucinda’s Story**

**L**ucinda and her family have endured more than their share of heartache. Her husband survived kidney cancer in 1998 only to be hit with seizures related to a brain tumor a few years later. The family’s insurance went by the wayside after his job ended as a journeyman electrician. “They wanted us to pay \$800 a month,” Lucinda said. “We wouldn’t have even been able to pay for anything else after that.”

With breast cancer in the family, Lucinda had her first mammogram at age 42. She knows regular screenings are important, but hadn’t made them an annual event until recently.

During a 2013 visit to the Indian Health Service clinic in nearby Belcourt, Lucinda noticed a *Women’s Way* placard. She’d been in that same waiting room before, but the information hadn’t seemed important. Lucinda inquired about *Women’s Way* and was soon scheduled for a mammogram, Pap test and wellness exam. “Everything went fine,” she said.

A year passed. Lucinda received a call reminding her to schedule an appointment. Lucinda says it’s comforting to know those annual reminders will keep coming thanks to *Women’s Way*. “I like the program because it pays for women to get these services,” she said. 

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**No insurance? No excuse.**

**Make the call.**

Women's Way 1.800.449.6696 | 1.800.280.5512 | 701.328.2306





**“Women’s Way is a great place to start. If they can’t help you, they will find somebody who can.”**

**– Gwen Kreft, Bismarck, N.D.**

**Mobile Imaging Specialist,  
DMS Health Technologies**

### **Gwen’s Story**

**T**he upbeat and gregarious Gwen tells ladies entering her truck for a mammogram that, “When we’re done with this, you’re going to tell me that it wasn’t so bad.” And, 99.9 percent of the time her patients report back, “You were right. It wasn’t so bad.”

As a mobile imaging specialist, Gwen drives established routes throughout the Upper Midwest in a vehicle that resembles a big motorhome. Inside is a digital mammography machine. She’s a self-described girl’s girl who wants to empower women and takes pride in being called the “Mammo Lady” by repeat patients.

“I say Pap, mammo, beer, lunch,” Gwen quipped. “You have a book club. You have a puzzle club. Why not have mammo parties?”

There is only an upside to regular screenings. “The earlier you can detect any cancer the better,” Gwen said, “There is the opportunity to cure breast cancer if it is caught early.”

To any woman who has endured a less-than-ideal mammogram experience, Gwen encourages her to try again with a different technician. “Patients are still in charge of their own health care,” she said. 



**“Women’s Way allowed me to have a wellness check-up. When you don’t have insurance you don’t always take care of yourself because you think, well, let’s take care of the kids, and the income isn’t always there.”**

**– Diane Schill, rural Hannah, N.D.**

*Women’s Way Enrollee*



### **Diane’s Story**

Life’s many blessings are in abundance at Diane’s farm, perched on the Dakota prairie just miles from the Canadian border. She raised three boys in a century-old farmhouse, tends to a flock of 30-some ewes and enjoys good health, dear friends and a kind husband.

Unfortunately, blessings can’t always pay the bills. In the past, health insurance wasn’t an option for Diane, a fiber artist who co-owns a small felting business. “It was unbelievably expensive – something like \$500 a

month,” Diane said. “We couldn’t afford it.”

Thankfully, Diane found a flier that connected her with *Women’s Way* a decade ago. She continues to rely on *Women’s Way* for preventative screenings like annual mammograms and has built a rapport with a local health care provider. “It’s been very good for me,” said Diane, “It’s really an important thing for women to go and be checked. It could be you who has cancer and you just don’t know.”



# August<sup>2015</sup>

**“Women’s Way is a very good thing. I like the way they call to remind me that I’m due. The ladies are so friendly on the phone.”**

**– Pam Baker, St. Michael, N.D.**

*Women’s Way Enrollee*

## **Pam’s Story**

**P**am doesn’t have time for hobbies. With five grown children, 13 grandchildren and a small in-home daycare, her days revolve around the needs of others.

Yet, this caregiver makes her annual breast and cervical cancer screenings a priority at the Indian Health Service clinic in nearby Fort Totten. “Women’s Way is a really good program to be on,” Pam said. “I referred one of my

girlfriends to it. I told her, ‘It’s going to help you in the long run, and you’ll never have to worry about paying for it.’”

Pam knows the absence of cancer in her family doesn’t provide any guarantees for the future. More than anything she wants to be around to see her grandchildren grow up. “I’d love to see it all,” Pam said. “They’re the main reason I try to keep healthy.” 



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**Do it for you. You are worth it.**

**Make the call.**

Women's Way 1.800.449.6696 | 1.800.280.5512 | 701.328.2306





***“Women’s Way is a wonderful program. It gives women the opportunity to get the health care they need.”***

**– Michelle Hardy, Beach, N.D.**

**Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP)  
Beach Medical Clinic**

## **Michelle’s Story**

**A** longtime resident of this rural community and in practice for 23 years, Michelle takes a personal interest in her patients. “It’s a close network,” she said. “I know these people very well. It’s like treating my friends.”

Michelle’s a matter-of-fact kind of person and tells her female patients the same thing she always told both her daughters. Regular breast and cervical cancer screenings are not just important. “It’s critical to get them,” she said. “That’s the bottom line.”

If money is an issue or even a concern, Michelle encourages women to investigate their options. “It is important to really seriously think about calling *Women’s Way* to see if you qualify,” she said. “Take advantage of this program. It’s available.”

“*Women’s Way* has honestly helped some women to get in who had serious issues,” Michelle said. “I’m pleased to share the program.” 





**“I’m a single parent.  
I feel it’s very, very  
important to get  
screened every year.  
I want my daughter to  
have me around.”**

**– Tina Reister and daughter  
Natasha, Jamestown, N.D.**

*Women’s Way Enrollee*

## **Tina’s Story**

**T**ina is no stranger to pinching pennies. It comes with the territory of being a single parent. “People worry. People worry about how they’re going to pay for things,” she said. “I know I do.”

Tina went without health insurance for years due to limited income. More recently she secured insurance through her employer, but it’s a high-deductible plan that doesn’t provide coverage for preventative screenings.

Screenings, especially those for breast cancer, are important to Tina. Her maternal grandmother had a mastectomy after being diagnosed with breast cancer.

Tina doesn’t worry about paying for annual mammograms or cervical cancer screenings. “I actually thought when I got insurance I’d be kicked off *Women’s Way*,” Tina said. “That wasn’t the case. It’s a great program. I don’t have to fret.”

Tina urges other women to contact *Women’s Way* to inquire about eligibility and to get their annual screenings. “Mammograms are just not a big deal anymore,” she said. “You need to do it. It’s a big deal if you don’t do it because it could be life threatening.” 





**“With *Women’s Way* you don’t have to go find it, it’s already there. Use it.”**

**– Michelle Crows Heart, New Town, N.D.**

*Women’s Way* Enrollee

## **Michelle’s Story**

In 2007, Michelle and her family travelled to the Pacific Northwest to visit her sister-in-law, who had breast cancer and wasn’t expected to survive. She died two weeks later. “She left my brother and their two beautiful children,” Michelle said.

Regular breast and cervical cancer screenings quickly became part of Michelle’s life. “I just want to make it right and not feel like I could have helped myself if something ever happened,” she said.

At the time Michelle worked as a certified nursing assistant (CNA) for the local nursing home. “You see, even though I had insurance I thought *Women’s Way* wouldn’t help,” Michelle said. “But, yeah they did. It’s awesome that way.”

With five children and a history of cancer in her family, Michelle appreciates the peace of mind that comes with annual screenings. “I go every October and I know it’s going to be okay,” she said. “I know there’s going to be help whether I need it or not.”

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**Regular mammograms and Pap tests can save your life.**

**Make the call.**

Women's Way 1.800.449.6696 | 1.800.280.5512 | 701.328.2306





**“I say your health is the most important thing you have. Do whatever it takes to maintain that health because you are important. We’re all important.”**

**– Terrie Mattson, Devils Lake, N.D.**

*Women’s Way Enrollee*

### **Terrie’s Story**

**T**errie and her longtime boyfriend came to Devils Lake to help her mom in 2008. While her mom later relocated elsewhere, the couple stayed. “We fell in love with the place and the people,” Terrie said. “We like the smaller towns.”

“Back in 2010 I didn’t have insurance or a job,” Terrie said. “I was able to get a free women’s check-up.”

That check-up included a routine Pap test, which revealed two types of Stage 0 or pre-invasive cancer. Terrie needed a hysterectomy and biannual Pap tests for the subsequent five years. Once she enrolled with *Women’s Way*, Terrie didn’t have to worry about related medical expenses.

“It was a total blessing,” Terrie said. “I used to think it was a sign of weakness to ask for help. But, I’ve learned as I’ve gotten more mature that is actually a sign of strength, because it means you care about yourself.” 

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**You care for everyone else – care for yourself too.**

**Make the call.**

Women's Way 1.800.449.6696 | 1.800.280.5512 | 701.328.2306



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**Jean Smith**  
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**Leah Madler**  
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**Barbara Steiner**  
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More program information available at: [www.ndhealth.gov/womensway](http://www.ndhealth.gov/womensway)

## Breast Health

### Early detection is your best protection.

- When breast cancer is found and treated early, the five-year survival rate is 98 percent.

### What are the risk factors for breast cancer?

Risk factors do not cause breast cancer, but they increase the chances that you may get breast cancer. Risk factors include:

- Being a woman.
- Being older than 50.
- Taking hormone replacement therapy for more than five years.
- Having a personal or family history of breast cancer. However, eight out of 10 breast cancers occur in women who have no family history of breast cancer.

### What breast changes should I discuss with my health-care provider?

- Skin color and/or texture such as redness,

## Cervical Health

### Screening saves lives.

- Cervical cancer can be prevented with regular screening tests and follow-up. It is also highly curable when found and treated early.

### What causes cervical cancer?

- The human papillomavirus (HPV) is the main cause of cervical cancer. HPV is a common virus that is passed from the skin of one person to another during sex.

### Are there tests that can prevent cervical cancer or find it early?

- Yes, the Pap test and the HPV test.

### What is a Pap test?

- A Pap test checks the cells of the cervix (the opening of the uterus) for changes that could lead to cancer.

### What is an HPV test?

- An HPV test checks your cervix for the virus that can cause abnormal cells and cervical cancer.

### How often should I screen for cervical cancer?

- Most women should have a Pap test every three years starting at age 21.
- Women age 30 or older may

rash, or orange peel appearance.

- Size or shape of your breast including swelling, dimpling, or puckering.
- Appearance of your nipple including a nipple that is turning inward when it is normally pointed outward, or a nipple that is scaly, itchy, or cracked.
- Nipple discharge that starts suddenly.
- Lump, hard knot, or thickening in or near your breast or in your underarm area.

### **What should I remember about breast health?**

- All women are at risk of getting breast cancer.
- Learn about your family history of breast cancer.
- Talk to your health-care provider about when to begin and how often to have a clinical breast exam and/or mammogram.
- Know what is normal for you. Signs of breast cancer are not the same for all women.

choose to have an HPV test along with the Pap test. If the Pap test and HPV test are normal, you can wait five years before testing again.

- Some women need Pap tests more often. Talk to your health-care provider to find out what's right for you.

### **How can I reduce my risk of cervical cancer?**

- Get a Pap test regularly.
- Do not smoke or use tobacco.
- Encourage young women and men ages 9 to 26 to complete the HPV vaccination series.





**1.800.449.6636 or 1.800.280.5512 • [www.ndhealth.gov/womensway](http://www.ndhealth.gov/womensway)**