

**Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program in Madison County:  
Using the Pink-Out Campaign to Educate a Community about the  
Importance of Health Screenings in a High Risk Population**

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**Abstract**

According to the 2013 Demographic Census, approximately 21,000 people reside in Madison County. A little over half of them are women. Due to a number of socio-economic and health-related factors, Madison County women are at a high risk of developing breast cancer, making up about 57% of cancer related deaths a year. The Madison County Health Department is dedicated to decreasing the rate of breast cancer related deaths among women by increasing awareness and participation in the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP). As part of the BCCCP program, every October, the Madison County Health Department hosts a Pink-Out Campaign that reaches out to local businesses, churches, and schools for donations, and organizes fundraisers to collect money to support the BCCCP Program. The Community Engaged Scholar project that I participated in assisted the Health Department with community outreach, collecting donations, coordinating fundraisers, creating informational materials for the Health Department, and developing a manual for future volunteers. This year, the Pink-Out Campaign was able to collect a total of \$2500. This amount, plus \$4,000 provided by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services will cover the cost of 83 mammograms and cervical cancer screenings. Working with the Madison County Health Department taught me a great deal about becoming engaged in a community and developing relationships, and mobilizing support, while representing an organization.

**Key Words:** Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program, Breast Cancer, Pink-Out Campaign, Mammography, Health Advocacy

## **Origin of the Project**

According to the Center for Disease Control, breast cancer is the most common cancer among American women. The risk factors include family history, dense breasts, drinking, smoking exposure to DES, genetics, night shift work, sedentary lifestyle, obesity, radiation from medical or environmental exposure, and socio-economic determinants (CDC, NICHHS). Getting mammograms regularly can increase the rate of survival through early detection (CDC).

From 2007 to 2013, breast cancer incidence increased by 7% in North Carolina (NCCCR). It is the 8<sup>th</sup> leading state in reported breast cancer incidents (Figure 1). Cancer is also the leading cause of death. The state also has a 22% mortality rate, similar to that of the national average. However, newly reported cases of breast cancer incidents are significantly higher than the national average (NCCCR).

Between the years of 2008 and 2010, only 77% of women between the ages of 50-74 reported having had a mammogram (CDC). The Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program remains to be the only government funded intervention in the fight to decrease the rate of breast cancer related deaths and increase the rate of breast cancer screening in the state (MCHD).

Madison County demographic information provided by a county census reported that of the 21,022 residents in the county, 51% are female with the largest age demographic being between the ages of 45 and 64. The median household income is \$38, 658 with 19% of residents living below the federal poverty line (census, 2013). Low socioeconomic status is associated with increased risks of cancer mortality (Hastert).

Madison County's 2011 Health Assessment reported that some of the contributing factors to the breast cancer rate are due to a history of tobacco farming, the prevalence of diesel emission air pollutants, the 20% of the population who are sedentary, that 40% of the population has high blood pressure, 32% have high cholesterol, 31% are overweight/obese, 20% are smokers, and 18% of people do not have insurance. Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Madison County with a reported 19% death rate due to breast cancer (SCHS). A large proportion of people also have less than a high school education, there is a high rate of unemployment, and the mostly rural area makes transportation and access to healthcare difficult (MCHD). These are also contributing factors to increased health risks associated with cancer.

Due to the number of socio-economic determinants and risk factors, a large proportion of women living in Madison County are at a greater risk of developing breast cancer, and due to the lack of affordable health care, will not participate in health screenings that could potentially save their lives. That is why the mission of the Madison County Health Department is to provide these women with access to the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP), which provides free cancer screenings to eligible women. Women must be between the ages of 45-64, Madison County residents living below the federal poverty line, without insurance.

Studies show that women who participate in programs designed to provide free mammograms and other cancer screenings are 5 times more likely to return for follow-up mammograms

(Gregory-Mercado). One study reported that “community-based strategies for health promotion lead to increases in screenings” and that “special events like health fairs and fundraisers or cultural events have a positive impact on participation in screenings (Escoffery).”

Part of Madison County’s Health Department’s mission for the BCCCP program is to get as many participants as possible. The more participation from women residents that the BCCCP program has the more federal money the health department receives in order to continue providing services free of charge to eligible women. In order to reach out to as many people as possible, the health department implements a Pink-Out Campaign every October. This year was the third year that the department has worked to create community outreach and garner community support to raise more money in order to help more women. They worked with the Madison County High School in order to coordinate special events during sports games in order to promote breast cancer awareness and the importance of early detection through yearly mammography to a large variety of people.

The Pink-Out Campaign requires a number of volunteers to help work at the fundraisers and raise money for BCCCP. During the month of October, local businesses are called asking for donations. This year, I suggested asking local churches as well. The health department relies heavily on the Pink-Out Campaign to raise additional funds for the BCCCP program. It is the responsibility of its volunteers to help make that possible.

## **Methods and Work Undertaken**

I first heard about the need for a volunteer, at the Madison County Health Department for work on the Pink-Out Campaign through a friend of mine who is a teacher at Mars Hill University. During my initial meeting with Dr. Candace Stroup, the coordinator for the BCCCP program and Pink-Out Campaign, we discussed the outline of the project and my responsibilities:

1. Create a flyer for this year’s campaign, including information about the BCCCP program requirements and the importance of Breast Cancer Screening (Figure 2)
2. Create a handout to have on tables at the Health Department in the waiting room, including the information found on the flyer. (Figure 3)
3. Call local businesses and ask for donations
4. Keep a record of places called and donation collected
5. Create a template for updating recordings of past year’s donations and to use for recording future donations. (Figure 4)
6. Attend October 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup>, fundraising events and help sell concessions and t-shirts to raise money for BCCCP program.
7. Create a volunteer manual for future volunteers to learn about the BCCCP program and the Pink-Out Campaign.

To create this year’s flyer I considered the readability, the length, graphics, language, and tone. I came up with a message that summarized the mission of the Health Department, the purpose of the BCCCP program, and its requirements. I included contact information and social media resources. Everything was written in printed in bright pink and I included pink ribbon graphics. The tone of the fly stressed the importance and benefits of mammograms, using positive messaging. For example, last year’s flyer stated that “having regular mammograms can

lower your risk of dying from breast cancer.” I changed this message to say “having regularly scheduled mammograms can increase breast cancer survival through early detection.”

To create the handouts for use in the Health Department’s waiting room, I printed half sheets of paper that looked the same as the flyer, but I omitted some of the information because the flyers were used at the Pink Out fundraisers and the handouts were specifically for use at the Health Department. These included basic information about BCCCP program and the importance of breast cancer screenings and they encouraged viewers to ask about program eligibility while at the Health Department. The benefit to having the handouts is that they can be kept on display in the waiting room all year long.

While working on this project, most of my time was spent making calls to local businesses and churches asking for donations. Twice a week I made calls to 54 area businesses and churches. I introduced myself as a Madison County Volunteer helping with the Pink-Out Campaign. I asked business owners or church officials how they were doing, reminded some of them about past participation and asked if they would like to donate again this year. Sometimes I had to send e-mails.

It was advantageous for me to have a list of past year’s donations because I was able to use that to persuade business owners to continue their yearly support. However, it was handwritten and difficult to read so I decided to create an excel spreadsheet for future record keeping. I did this by making an excel spreadsheet that listed the names of the business/church in one column, the owner or person of contact in another, phone numbers in another column and a column to include space for note taking. I was able to record whether I left messages or was able to confirm if a donation was or was not made.

On October 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 17<sup>th</sup>, I attended the Pink Out fundraising events at the Marshall High School. The events included a JV Football game, a soccer game, a volleyball game, and the Varsity Football game. We arrived one hour prior to an event to set up posters, a banner, and a concession table. The items for sale included donated baked goods, pencils, stickers, mini footballs, pins, ribbons, necklaces, wrist bands, pink rubber duckies, and t-shirts; everything was pink with most of the items were decorated with pink ribbons for breast cancer awareness. During the games we sold these items to collect money for the BCCCP program. We also had face painting at the varsity game, which I was able to help with.

Since I was the first student volunteer to help with the Pink-Out Campaign, my site supervisor and I thought it would be helpful to create a manual for future volunteers. I created this manual by using a pink binder, page protectors, and printing information I thought would be useful for future volunteers. I sectioned the manual into three parts. In the front I printed information about the BCCCP program at the Madison County Health Department. Following that section I included the past and current flyers and handouts. In the last section I included the updated spreadsheet of last year’s participants and donations, this year’s record, and a blank spreadsheet for next year. Something to consider for the future of the project would be to create an e-manual, containing the files in a google folder, this way the health department can alter them for future iterations.

## **Ties to Academia**

During my time at UNCA, the majority of my coursework as a Health and Wellness Major has focused on health communication, health parity, community outreach and service learning, with special interest in poverty, nutrition and policy. A major focus of learning has been learning to understand how to approach health related issues and develop preventative measures. We spend time concentrating on research techniques, program planning, and using data to implement and sometime evaluate interventions.

In health communication and health education courses I've learned critical thinking skills that have helped me learn about the importance of program planning and implementation. I've learned how to create objectives, campaigns, and evaluate the implementation of a health related intervention that addresses a health related issue. During my work for the Pink Out campaign, I did research about Madison County and the risk factors for women, in regards to breast cancer. I identified my objectives and my role as a volunteer for the health department and helped my site supervisor with the Pink Out Campaign. The campaign's main goal was to raise as much money as possible to provide as many free mammograms, and help to reduce the rate of breast cancer related deaths in Madison County. The intervention addressed a specific health related issue and by successfully raising money, we were able to evaluate our objectives and conclude that the Pink-Out Campaign is an effective campaign for raising funds and creating awareness for the BCCCP program.

The service-learning courses I have taken have made the biggest impact on who I am. When I first came to UNCA my focus was on nutrition and I was reluctant to participate in community service projects. However, it has become my favorite part about being a health and wellness major. The experiences I have had working with different groups of people on different health related issues has done so much to improve me as a person. Not only have I built a stronger resume, but I've acquired so many skills and built a network with community partners by being a part of so many community outreach projects. This project specifically has been my greatest experience. I learned so much about community outreach and the challenges that will arise. I learned how to strengthen skills and develop new ones that I will carry with me in my professional life.

Understanding health parity, poverty, and policy really helped me during my project. The research I did about breast cancer, specifically its prevalence in Madison County helped to create an evidence-based strategy of informing women about the importance of breast cancer screening because of the fact that early detection can help save lives. Being an advocate for social justice has become a part of me because of the coursework I have done at UNCA. Speaking up for disadvantaged women is something I have developed a passion for over time, and was the number one reason I signed up to assist the Madison County Health Department with this project.

## **Challenges Faced and Responses to Those Challenges**

### **Research and Advocacy**

Current health status' of Madison County Residents is not regularly updated, nor is it easy to find and the census statistics are based on the number of returned surveys. This makes needs assessment difficult and health advocacy difficult for the people of Madison County. However, based on the popularity of services offered by the Madison County Health Department, women's health status is apparently in need of programs focused on health screening and preventative initiatives towards the fight against breast cancer.

The BCCCP program is the only program in Madison County that helps women learn about breast cancer and screenings, and the funding for it depends on the number of participants it helps each year. As more and more people are signing up for health insurance, the need for programs to help the uninsured is diminishing. However, a population of uninsured people still exists and the need for programs, like the BCCCP, is extremely important since that population remains at a higher risk of getting cancer due to the many socio-economic factors.

Health advocacy is challenging. Being a liaison between the health department and a large community was my greatest challenge. Most of my project hours were spent making phone calls to area businesses and churches asking for donations. It was so important to create a script that would quickly inform the person I was speaking with, keeping in mind to speak slowly and clearly because while on the phone I had several tasks to do. I had to introduce myself and ask how the person was doing, inform them of my purpose for calling, remind them how they participated last year during the Pink-Out Campaign, and ask them if they would like to donate again. I had to answer questions, I had to leave messages, and I had to keep calling every couple of days until I was able to cross all 54 business owners and churches off of my list.

It was discouraging when I was told no, they didn't want to donate this year, frustrating leaving messages and not getting called back, and having to call some people repeatedly seemed tedious and exhausting. However, it made me especially happy when I would talk with someone and they would agree to donate, sometimes more than just the cost of one mammogram.

I had difficulty getting started, but after a couple practices I was able to communicate very effectively with people. I felt that when I was speaking with potential donors I was speaking for the group of women that I was advocating for, which were the women who depended on the existence of the BCCCP program. I was also a voice for the health department. The future of the program relies heavily on community donations. Without them, the program would not be able to provide for enough women to keep the program federally funded.

### **Independent work and time management**

The work done during the Pink Out Campaign was accomplished by setting goals, taking the time to create flyers, handouts, and posters, organizing fundraisers, making phone calls, and collecting donations. A lot of the work to make everything happen during one month's time is done independently and takes a great deal of planning and project management.

Some of the tasks required an ability to motivate myself in order to meet deadlines. I also had to manage my personal time while I worked on this project. I am currently finishing my last

semester of school and have a lot of homework, I also have a part-time job, and I'm married and have a house, which comes with other responsibilities. Prioritizing my time and energy was challenging, but I was able to use my organizational skills and task-manage very well. I kept a planner and highlighted major events regarding meetings with my site supervisor and dates of fundraisers. I also kept a journal of activities that I participated in as part of my project. I recorded time spent on various tasks and I also wrote reflections about what took place. This was especially helpful during the process of writing this portion of the paper.

### Measuring Success

I initially believed that I would measure the success of my project based on completion and receiving the Community Engaged Scholar distinction upon graduation. However, I have come to realize that the measurement of my success relates to my personal growth, the quality and effectiveness of my work, and whether or not I was able to create a positive difference for a community.

Working towards personal growth is challenging. It takes a great deal of self-awareness, open mindedness, and an ability to change attitudes and beliefs. I believe I have developed a better understanding of myself as a public health advocate by developing and strengthening my skills. It's also challenging to evaluate quality and effectiveness of my work, because I set a list of objectives for myself and I had expectations. I wanted to double the amount of donations this year, which I thought I could do by calling more people than last year and getting churches involved. Although I did more work, I however didn't even get half the amount of money that was donated last year. I don't look at this as a failure though. 32 women will be getting a free mammogram, so the challenge is not to think of my success in numbers, but to realize that I was able to reach out to a community, mobilize support, and help out a number of women who need the service.

Because of my work I have been able to help provide preventative health care to women in a high risk population and create positive difference in a community. Trying to create a positive impact on a community is challenging, but I am especially thankful for this experience and I hope to see greater strides towards social justice for the women of Madison County.

## Results

The work I did for the Madison County Health Department helped them raise money for the BCCCP program, create an organized system of record keeping, and helped advocate for women's health. I helped them maintain current relationships within the community and created some new partnerships as well. Based on the number of people I talked to on the phone and the number of attendees at the sporting events, I would approximate that our message reached at least a thousand people. We were able to inform a great number of people about the Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program because of the Pink Out Campaign.

This year the Pink-Out Campaign was able to raise \$2500 towards the BCCCP program. This number reflects the amount donated by local businesses and churches, plus money received during the fundraisers. This will provide 32 eligible women with free mammograms or cervical cancer screenings. In addition to the \$4,000 funds provided by the NC Department of Health and

Human Services, a total of \$6,500 will help the Madison County Health Department provide BCCCP services to 83 women.

What has also resulted because of my involvement in this project is the creation of a relationship between UNCA and the Madison County Health Department. UNCA's Health and Wellness Promotion Program lends itself not just to Buncombe County, but to all of Western North Carolina. The students in the Health and Wellness Promotion program provide a great resource within our Asheville community, but also to our neighbors. I hope that the Madison County Health Department will call on UNCA students to help with future projects.

## **Sustainability**

The sustainability of this project depends on a volunteer's ability to work independently, communicate the needs and purpose of the program to garner support and maintain relationships in the community; they must be goal-oriented, creative and organized. The work done during the Pink-Out Campaign allows a volunteer to learn, develop and strengthen these skills. They will learn the importance of building and maintaining working relationships between community partners, gain a greater understanding of public advocacy, and become proficient in phone etiquette. These skills will sustain them in whatever career path they choose.

During my initial meeting with Candace at the Madison County Health Department, she was able to tell me a little about the program, gave me a couple web addresses to look at for more information, and a call list of business participants from last year. Since this was the first year they had a student volunteer, we decided that I would create a manual for the health department in order to inform future volunteers about what the project entails in a more formal and organized way. The manual includes information about the BCCCP program, past and current flyers and handouts, and updated spreadsheets listing past and new business and church participants in Madison County. It also allows the health department to keep a yearly record of participants, donations, and total outcomes during the Pink-Out Campaign.

Tracking the successes of the Pink-Out Campaign is important to the BCCCP program. The program and initiatives are important to the department because of its reliance on government funding. This year the health department only received \$4,000 towards the program, which was half of what they received the previous year. The Pink-Out Campaign tries to raise more money in order to help more women through the BCCCP program because the more participants they help the more the money the government is willing to give. This is especially important to a community that needs the services provided by the BCCCP program.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, due to the socio-economic and various health factors that put Madison County's female population at risk for getting breast cancer, programs that offer free breast cancer screenings are immensely important and have the potential to continue to work to decrease the rate of breast cancer related deaths. It is important that these programs work to create community support in order to sustain program services and help as many women as possible. My role during the Pink-Out Campaign was to provide a way to keep records of the

Pink-Out Campaign's successes, develop educational materials for the community, and maintain the relationship between the health department and community residents.

My work required a lot of organization, helped me develop and strengthen my communication skills, and allowed me to advocate for women's health. It was challenging at times, but because of my abilities to work independently and my passion for health advocacy I was able to manage my tasks and be a part of a successful community health intervention.

What resulted because of the efforts made by Madison County Health Department and my work during the Pink-Out Campaign was that 83 women, who are eligible to participate in the BCCCP program, will receive a free mammograms and cervical cancer screenings. Early detection is associated with increased rates of breast cancer survival. I like to think that even if one of the 83 women who receives a free mammogram and tests positive for cancer, will then be able to get the care she needs before the cancer spreads.

I enjoyed working on this project and I hope that the health department will be able to continue to receive help every October with their Pink-Out Campaign. I hope that every year more and more money will be donated to the BCCCP program as a result of campaign efforts and increased community support. In the long-term, I hope the effort to address Madison County's health related issues increases and that future census' will report decreased percentages of people whose lifestyle and socio-economic determinants puts them at greater risk for living with disease.

Figure 1

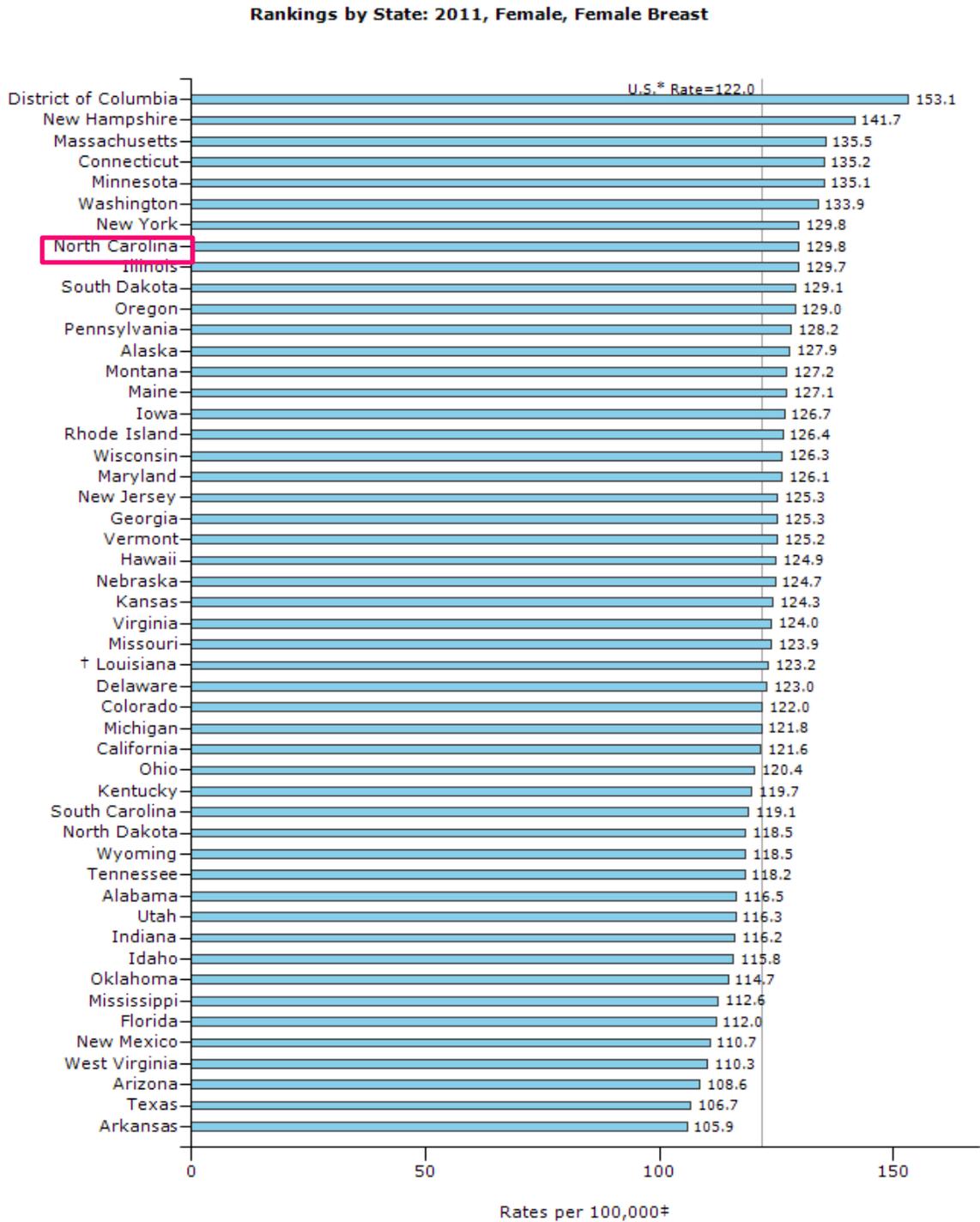


Figure 2

# Get your Pink OUT!

The Madison Patriots Football players, Cheerleaders and Fans are wearing pink tonight to promote Breast Cancer Awareness.

Madison County Health Department wants you to be aware that **Early Detection is the Best Prevention for Cancer!** When breast cancer is caught during the early stages, it is easier to treat. Mammograms can detect cancer before it is big enough to feel or cause symptoms.

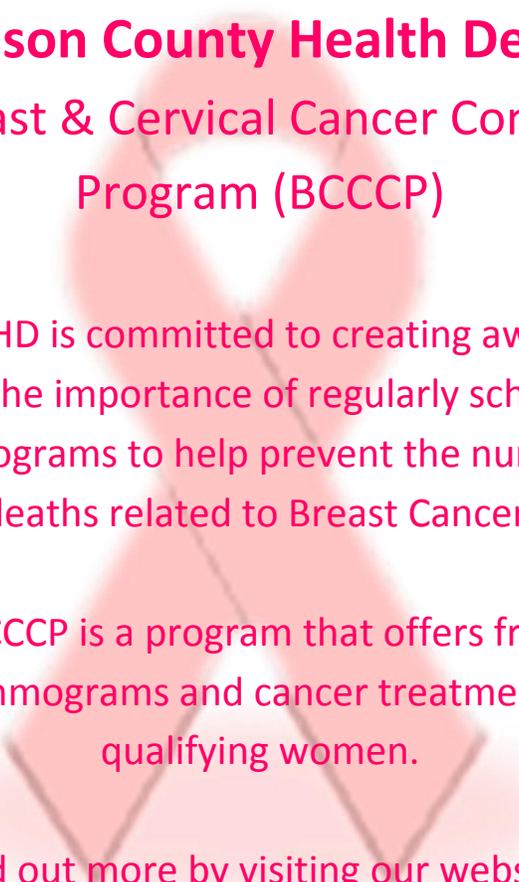
Having regularly scheduled mammograms can increase breast cancer survival through early detection.

The Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) at the Madison County Health Department offers free breast exams and mammograms for women, who are Madison County residents, age 40-65, who meet the income eligibility and have no insurance.

To find out if you are eligible, call MCHD at 828-649-3531

Follow us on Facebook

Figure 3



**Madison County Health Depart.**  
**Breast & Cervical Cancer Control**  
**Program (BCCCP)**

The MCHD is committed to creating awareness about the importance of regularly scheduled mammograms to help prevent the number of deaths related to Breast Cancer.

BCCCP is a program that offers free mammograms and cancer treatment to qualifying women.

Find out more by visiting our website:

<http://bcccp.ncdhhs.gov>

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Figure 4

Business/ Church name	contact name	phone number	notes (2014)
Carolina Ready Mix	Diane	686-3041	
Stanley's BP	Matthew Stanley	649-2522	
Zuma Coffee	Joel	649-1617	
Long Neck's		649-0400	
Wagon Wheel	Camille/Amy	689-4755	
Mars Hill Pharmacy	Debbie	689-2667	
Dimension's Studio	Angel/Tracy	689-5267	
Papa Nick's	Debbie	689-8566	
Hot Springs Spa	Rachel	622-7676	
French Broad Deli	Regina	649-8177	
French Broad Paving	Regina	649-0077	
Smoky Mountain Diner	Casey Franklin	622-7571	
Madison Florist		649-2518	
Country Places Realty	Kathy	649-0444	
Sandy Bottoms Trail Rides	Jackie Ball	649-3464	
Blue Flame Grill	Nancy	649-8201	
Plaza Burger Parlor	wes/ Michelle	649-3378	

Figure 4 (cont'd)

Momma's Country Kitchen	Sherry	649-3565	
Farm Bureau Insurance Marshall	Marie parks	649-3322	
Blue Ridge Funeral Services	Becky Capps	680-9963	
Robert Adams Dentistry	Dr. Adams	649-2621	
Mars Hill University	Tracy Grant	689-1100	
Original look auto refinishing	Jimmy	649-3408	
By-pass automotive	Justin	649-2540	
Alta Ridge Foot Specialists	Dr. Van	680-1161	
Pendland's Dept Store		649-2811	
Dill's automotive	Teresa Dill	649-2951	
Scott Haynie Trucking Inc.		649-3429	
Dancing Moon Print Solutions	Laura	689-9353	
Marshall Pharmacy	Cynthia	649-1632	
H and C Tires	Clifton Horrell	649-2450	
Roberts Construction		649-9333	
Madison Funeral Home	Laura	649-9163	
Rotary Club of Madison Country	Reich Gardner		

Figure 4 (cont'd)

Town of Marshall	Michelle Massey	649-3031	
Town of Mars Hill		689-2301	
Walnut Service Center		649-9016	
C Kent Cole Construction	Kent cole	689-3501	
Lonesome Mountain Paving	Terry	689-2223	
Vast Value		649-0100	
French Broad EMC			
Ingles Mars Hill		689-5980	
Ingles Marshall		649-3266	
Mars Hill Baptist	Sharon Welsh	689-2911	
Abundant Mercy	Rev. John	649-8211	
Forks of Ivy Baptist Church		645-2852	
Calvary Worship	Pastor Rusty	649-1073	
Grapevine Missionary Baptist		689-5528	
Episcopal Church	Lynn	689-2517	
First Baptist Church	Pastor Freeman	649-3151	
Enon Baptist	Pastor Drew	649-3986	
Marshall Presbyterian Church	Melissa	649-3622	
North Fork Church		683-5689	

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