



## **The South West Regional Cancer Program and Cancer Care Ontario Invite You to 'Just Book It' This October**

*Booking a mammogram takes just five minutes and could save your life*

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and the South West Regional Cancer Program, in partnership with Cancer Care Ontario, is inviting eligible women aged 50 to 54 to 'Just Book It' by scheduling a mammogram appointment. The average mammogram screening takes just five minutes to book and less than 10 minutes to complete.

This year's campaign is focused on increasing screening participation among the 50 to 54 age group in particular. The Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP) reports that the 50 to 54 age group has the largest number of screen-eligible women who have not booked their mammogram appointments.

Peg, a recent breast cancer survivor, knows how important it is to get screened. In the fall of 2013 she received a letter from Cancer Care Ontario reminding her she was due for a mammogram. Life was busy at the time, and she put the notice aside. It wasn't until she received a second follow-up letter that she decided to book an appointment. The results indicated a breast cancer diagnosis. "It's really incredible," says Peg, "had it not been for that letter I would have let it go." After her diagnosis, Peg underwent a lumpectomy and six doses of chemotherapy, followed by five weeks of radiation therapy.

"It has been shown that early detection of breast cancer through mammography can result in significant health benefits, including increased treatment options and better survival rates," says Sandra McFarlane, Regional Medical Radiation Technologist in the South West. "Breast cancer occurs primarily in women 50 to 74 years of age, so now is the time for women on the younger end of this age range, from 50 to 54, to not only start thinking about screening for breast cancer but to start booking their regular mammograms."

Peg received her final dose of Herceptin last month. She says her hair is growing back - curly this time, and she's training for a half marathon, which she completed prior to her diagnosis. "I'm fortunate," says Peg. "I had no suspicion that anything was wrong. I would encourage women not to hesitate. Go and book your mammogram."

Eligible women are encouraged to book a mammogram through the OBSP at any time by calling 1-800-668-9304. No referral from a doctor is required.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in Canadian women, with one in nine women expected to be diagnosed with it in their lifetime. In 2015, an estimated 9,800 Ontario women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and approximately 1,900 women will die of the disease.

"Mammograms are still the best and most reliable way to detect breast cancer early on," says Sandra. "Breast cancers can be detected through screening mammography when they are smaller, with a better chance of being treated successfully. This is why we are inviting women aged 50 to 54 to start screening sooner rather than later – early detection is key."

**South West Regional Cancer Program** oversees the delivery and quality of cancer services for the counties of Grey, Bruce, Huron, Perth, Middlesex, Oxford, Elgin, and part of Norfolk. It is one of 13 Regional Cancer Programs created by Cancer Care Ontario in 2005 to ensure cancer care is delivered according to province-wide quality standards.

**Cancer Care Ontario** – an Ontario government agency – drives quality and continuous improvement in disease prevention and screening, the delivery of care and the patient experience, for cancer, chronic kidney disease and access to care for key health services. Known for its innovation and results-driven approaches, CCO leads multi-year system planning, contracts for services with hospitals and providers, develops and deploys information systems, establishes guidelines and standards and tracks performance targets to ensure system-wide improvements in cancer, chronic kidney disease and access to care.

**Sandra and Peg will be available for interview by phone between 1pm – 3pm on October 22.**

**For more information or to arrange an interview, please contact:**

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