



## County of Onondaga Office of the County Executive

J. Ryan McMahon, II  
*County Executive*

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### **Media Release**

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## **County Executive Ryan McMahon Recognizes October as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month**

*Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in the United States*

**SYRACUSE, N.Y.** – County Executive J. Ryan McMahon, II recognized October as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Breast cancer is the most common cancer among United States women, no matter your race or ethnicity.

Many things affect a person's chance of getting breast cancer, these are called risk factors. Some risk factors cannot be controlled and include being a woman, getting older, having dense breasts, having radiation to the chest area early in life, family history and genetics. However, the good news is that a physically active lifestyle can help to prevent cancer. It is important to see your health care provider for regular check-ups, eat healthy foods, get exercise, maintain a healthy weight, limit alcohol use and do not smoke. Monitoring your breast health prior to the age of 40 is also critically important.

Do not wait to get your mammogram. Routine mammogram screening at age 40 or older is an important step to help find breast cancer early. Do not wait to get your mammogram because of COVID-19. Medical facilities are taking extra steps to protect the health and safety of staff and patients. With early detection breast cancer is usually easier to treat and has better outcomes.

Most women (about 8 out of 10) who get breast cancer do not have a family history of the disease. However, women who have close blood relatives like a mother or sister who have had breast cancer are at a higher risk themselves. About 5-10% of breast cancers are thought to be hereditary, meaning they result directly from gene defects passed on from a parent. The most common cause of hereditary breast cancer is inherited defective BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes.

Breast cancer may not cause any symptoms in its early stages. If symptoms do appear, they may include the following:

- A lump, thickening, or swelling in part of the breast or underarm area;
- New pain in one spot that does not go away;
- Nipple discharge other than breast milk, including blood;
- Pulling in of the nipple or other parts of the breast;
- Dimpling or puckering of the breast skin;
- Any change in the size or shape of the breast;
- Swelling, warmth, redness, or darkening of the breast skin itchy, scaly sore, or rash on the nipple

Free mammograms are available through the Onondaga County Cancer Services Program (CSP) for women between the ages of 40 and 64 who do not have health insurance or who experience other barriers to completing their screenings, along with any necessary follow-up. Services are available at many healthcare provider sites throughout the city of Syracuse and Onondaga County.

Whether you have health insurance or not, having a mammogram may save your life. If you are a woman between the ages of 40 and 64 and do NOT have health insurance, call 315-435-3653 or visit [www.ongov.net/health/cancerscreening.html](http://www.ongov.net/health/cancerscreening.html) to see if you qualify for a free mammogram. Take care of yourself this October and schedule your mammogram today!

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