

BREAST CANCER IN SOUTH CAROLINA

Where We Are

Breast cancer is unusual because White women are more likely to get the disease, but Black women are more likely to die from breast cancer. This is especially striking for younger women who tend to have the most aggressive forms of the disease. We need to work to eliminate the racial disparity in death rates. Fortunately, mammography screening in women older than 40 has been shown to reduce death rates. There also are lifestyle behaviors, especially physical activity and diet, that appear to reduce the chance of developing breast cancer. Breast cancer is a major focus of cancer-related research in South Carolina. The South Carolina Cancer Alliance has a Breast and Female Cancer Workgroup to bring people together and work on related issues.

South Carolina Statistics

- Breast cancer is the 3rd most common cancer diagnosed overall.
- It is the **most** commonly diagnosed cancer among women.
- It ranks 3rd for cancer death rates overall and 2nd in women.
- Black women have a **11%** lower rate of breast cancer, but have a **39%** higher rate of dying from this cancer.

South Carolina Success

State Funding for BCN - In 2008 and 2009, advocacy efforts successfully obtained \$2 million in the state budget to expand breast and cervical cancer screening through the Best Chance Network (BCN). BCN has been funded by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) since 1991 and is managed by the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC). This state funding provided cancer screening services for an additional 9,000 low-income uninsured women throughout South Carolina. Lead advocacy partners in this effort included the American Cancer Society and Susan G. Komen for the Cure.



"As a legislator, I am proud to have played a role in ensuring thousands of uninsured women will have access to lifesaving screening services for breast and cervical cancer through the Best Chance Network."

Representative Tracy Edge

Call to Action!

South Carolinians:

- Encourage women to be screened for breast cancer at recommended intervals.
- Minimize alcohol consumption.*
- Increase/promote physical activity, especially to reduce post-menopausal breast cancer.*
- Maintain a healthy weight for post-menopausal breast cancer.**
- Advocate for building environments that promote physical activity.

Legislators: *in addition to the above*

- Support legislation to increase appropriate access to breast and cervical cancer screening.
- Increase breast cancer screening messages in your community.

Clinicians and Hospital or Medical Facility Administrators:

- Provide meeting space for cancer support groups.
- Encourage participation in research, including clinical trials.
- Encourage women to assist with the design and participate in studies of women who have had early-stage cancer and have finished therapy.
- Encourage eligible women to get mammograms at recommended intervals.
- Assure that your cancer cases are reported to the hospital cancer registry or central cancer registry.

* AICR nutrition, physical activity panel risk factor conclusions were convincing

** AICR nutrition, physical activity panel risk factor conclusions were probable

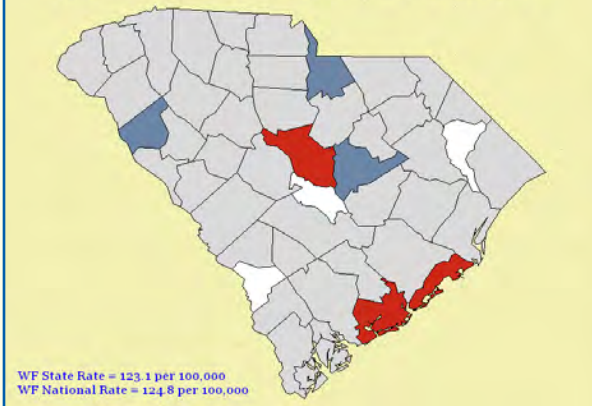
South Carolina Success

Breast and Cervical Cancer

Treatment Act: Since July 2005, the South Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has provided Medicaid coverage for treatment of breast and cervical cancer to indigent women in South Carolina through the Breast Cancer Prevention and Treatment Act. Joint advocacy efforts led to matching state dollars to fully implement the program in our state, providing treatment to thousands of women.

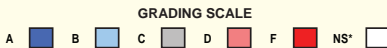
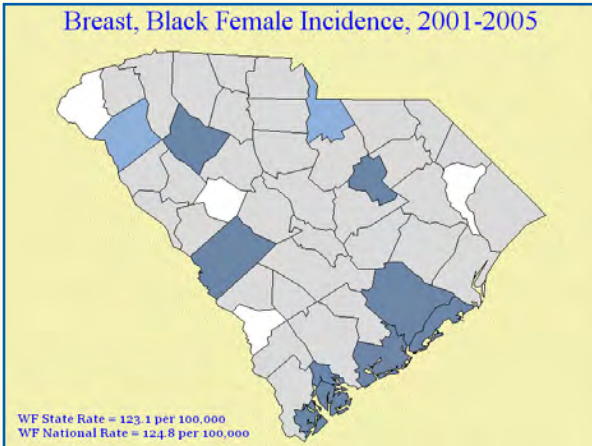


Breast, White Female Incidence, 2001-2005



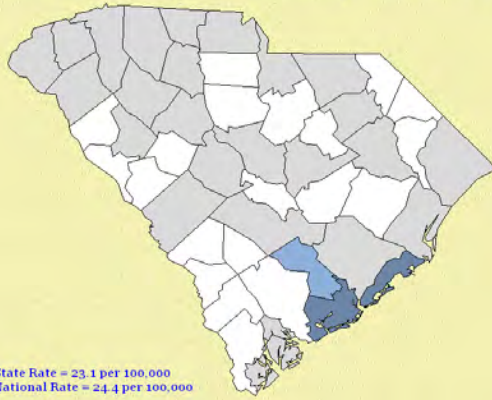
** Counties that are not shaded have fewer than 20 cases/deaths of cancer over the 5 year period (2001-2005). Working with small numbers can lead to instability in the calculated age-adjusted rates for mortality and incidence. As a result statistics for these counties are not displayed.*

Breast, Black Female Incidence, 2001-2005



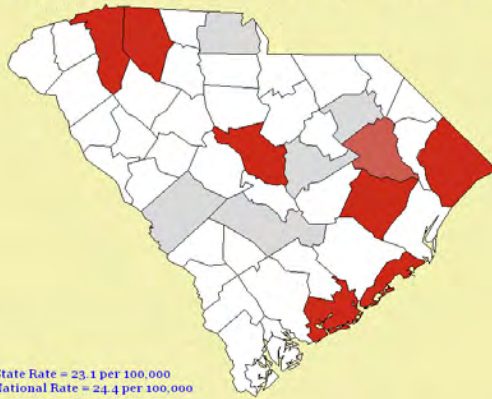
- **White Females:** Charleston and Richland counties rated worst in the state for breast cancer incidence, Grade F. Abbeville, Lancaster, and Sumter counties rated best, Grade B. All other counties rated Grade C, no different than the state or nation for cancer incidence.
- **Black Females:** Anderson and Lancaster counties rated better than the state at Grade B. Aiken, Beaufort, Charleston, Laurens, and Lee counties rated best in the state, Grade A. All other counties rated Grade C, no different than the state or nation for cancer incidence.

Breast, White Female Mortality, 2001-2005



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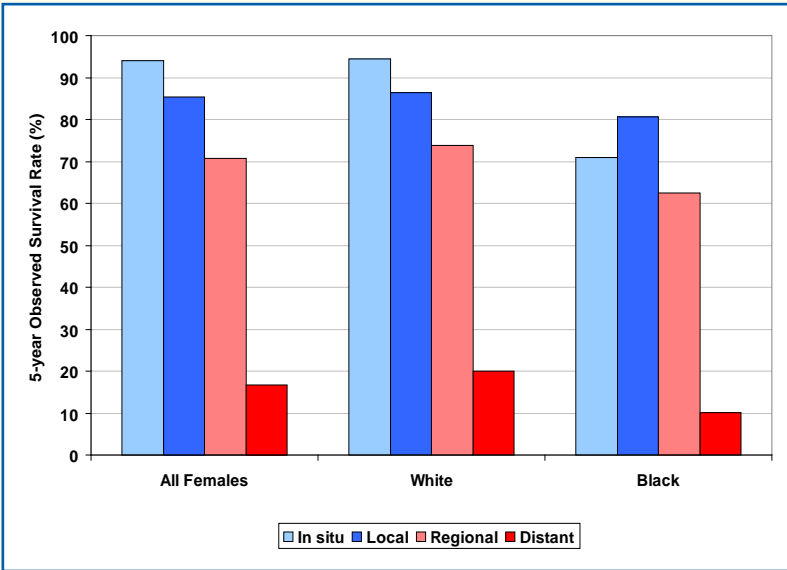
Breast, Black Female Mortality, 2001-2005



GRADING SCALE

A B C D F NS*

- **White Females:** While Charleston County rated poorly for rates of new cancers, it rated best in the state for breast cancer deaths with Grade A. Dorchester County rated better than the state or nation with Grade B. All other counties rated Grade C, no different.
- **Black Females:** Six counties rated worst in the state for deaths due to breast cancer, Grade F: Charleston, Horry, Greenville, Richland, Spartanburg, and Williamsburg. Florence County rated worse than the state or nation, Grade D. All other counties rated no different, Grade C.



Female Breast Cancer 5-yr Observed Survival Rate (%) by SEER Stage at Diagnosis and Race, South Carolina, 1996-2005

Note: excludes children (ages 0-19)

Source: South Carolina Central Cancer Registry

- S.C. women with breast cancer diagnosed at the earliest stage, before any invasion or spread of cancer cells, have a 95% chance of survival for five years.
- Among S.C. women who are diagnosed with breast cancer after regional or distant spread has occurred, the chance of surviving five years drops to 70% then 17%, respectively.
- White women in S.C. have higher five-year survival rates than Black women for breast cancer at each stage of disease at diagnosis.



Left: Debbie Bryant, MUSC Hollings Cancer Center, and community member Pamela Reese participate in breast cancer screening on the mobile health unit.