



**Press Release**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Spotlight on Breast Cancer Awareness and the Importance of Early Detection**

*Reeves Regional Health urges women to discuss screening options with their medical providers.*

PECOS, Texas (October 7, 2024) – Approximately one in eight women in the United States—13 percent—will face a diagnosis of invasive breast cancer during their lifetime. October marks Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Reeves Regional Health (RRH) is using the occasion to raise awareness about the life-saving importance of routine cancer screenings.

“Texas ranks 39th out of 50 states for women aged 45 and older who are up to date on mammograms,” says Dr. Deitrick Gorman, Family Practice with OB in Pecos. “This low ranking is concerning and highlights the urgent need to improve awareness and access to critical health screenings like mammograms, which are vital for early breast cancer detection and treatment.”

Breast cancer is a type of malignant tumor that forms in the cells of breast tissue, typically starting in the ducts or lobules. While regular mammograms are essential for early detection, the first noticeable symptom is often the appearance of a lump in or around the breast, underarm, or collarbone. This lump may be challenging, painless, and uneven in shape, though it can sometimes be tender or soft.

Other early signs include breast size or shape changes, skin dimpling, or unusual nipple discharge. Early diagnosis significantly increases the chances of successful treatment.

In 2024, it is estimated that 313,510 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed in women in the nation, along with 56,500 new cases of non-invasive breast cancer. Unfortunately, around 42,250 women are expected to die from breast cancer this year.

Dr. Gorman says these statistics highlight the disease's widespread nature and the continued need for awareness and early detection. Although survival rates have improved significantly, the breast cancer mortality rate has declined at a slower pace in recent years, dropping by about one percent annually since 2013.

This trend emphasizes the importance of early detection through screenings like mammograms, which remain one of the most effective ways to catch breast cancer in its early, more treatable stages.

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Men are also susceptible to breast cancer, though it is rare. In 2024, an estimated 2,790 men are expected to be diagnosed with invasive breast cancer in the U.S. While the incidence rate remains low at roughly 1 in 833 men, the disease can be just as dangerous for men as for women, emphasizing the importance of awareness and early detection across all genders.

In Texas, an estimated 19,921 women are expected to be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2024. Sadly, about 3,400 women in the state are projected to die from the disease this year. These figures highlight the ongoing need for awareness, early detection, and advancements in breast cancer treatment and support.

When it comes to detecting breast cancer, the American Cancer Society recommends that women between the ages of 40 and 44 should have the option to start screening with a mammogram every year. Women ages 45 to 54 should get a mammogram annually. Women 55 and older should consult with their healthcare provider to determine if a mammogram should be annually, or every other.

Although many popular initiatives year-round raise breast cancer awareness, many women still do not follow recommended screening measures.

“We often encounter women, particularly those over 60, who have never had a mammogram,” Dr. Gorman says. “Regular screening for breast cancer is essential for early detection and treatment. Ignoring this vital health check can have serious, even deadly, consequences.”

Medicare, Medicaid, and most private health plans cover all or part of breast cancer screenings. Women are urged to check with their medical insurance providers to learn more about coverage, but they should immediately have these essential screenings.

RRH is hosting the 9th Annual Mammo-Mania on Oct. 12, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. at RRH (2349 Medical Dr.). The event offers a free breast exam and 3D mammogram to the first 25 participants as part of the hospital’s effort to promote early detection and improve health outcomes for women in the region. For more information about the event, please call 432-447-3551 ext. 1331.

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**Reeves Regional Health**

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Talk with your primary care provider about mammograms and other cancer screenings. To find a local medical provider, please visit [www.reevesregional.com](http://www.reevesregional.com).

### **About Reeves Regional Health**

Reeves Regional Health (RRH), formally known as Reeves County Hospital District, provides healthcare services for Reeves County and neighboring West Texas communities. Founded in 1954, RRH, a Level IV Trauma Center, offers various medical services, including emergency care, diagnostic imaging, physical therapy, general surgery, a clinical laboratory, and more. RRH also operates Reeves Regional Home Health and Hospice and Reeves Regional Rural Health Clinic. In November 2022, RRH began serving patients from a new \$115 million, 140,000-square-foot campus. For more information, please visit [www.reevesregional.com](http://www.reevesregional.com).

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