



Advocacy Update

Sent January 27, 2010

New Breast Self-Examination Shower Cards Available at WRJ

The Landsberg Zale Research Fund in Surgical Oncology, through the generosity and good offices of Gloria Landsberg, has once again provided WRJ with new breast self-examination shower cards. Order as many as you need. This is a service to sisterhoods, the only charge is for shipping.

Much controversy and confusion have surrounded breast cancer screening since the new guidelines issued on November 16, by the United States Preventive Services Task Force, an independent panel of experts appointed by the federal Department of Health and Human Services, recommended that regular breast cancer screening for most women begin at age fifty, not forty, as had previously been the policy. The task force indicated, however, that this recommendation does not apply to women with the possibility of a risk factor for breast cancer, such as a genetic mutation, and suggested personalized decision making, based on an informed context, regarding the starting of regular mammography screening. Ashkenazic Jewish women may have such risk factors and should discuss the age of beginning mamography with their physicians.

The American Cancer Society, ACS, has retained its policy, recommending that women over forty years of age “should have a screening mammogram every year.” The [ACS website](#), has an informative discussion on breast cancer screening.

Program Suggestions for Sisterhoods

Programs are an excellent way to raise awareness and convey important information about breast and ovarian cancer. Work with your local office of the American Cancer Society or breast and ovarian cancer division at a nearby teaching hospital. Have the breast self-examination cards available for all attendees.

The Mayyim Hayyim Living Waters Community Mikveh and Education Center's (Newton, MA) *Prayers for the Journey: A Jewish Healing Guide for Women with Cancer*, is a useful resource for the spiritual aspect of programming. WRJ helped to fund this sourcebook with a YES Fund grant.

1. A panel program – Invite speakers on various aspects of breast cancer: prevention, detection, genetic implications for Jewish women, treatment, research, or legislation. Include some of the following as speakers: breast cancer survivors, genetics counselors, physicians (radiologists, surgeons, and oncologists), nurses, specialists in public health, nutritionists, social workers, or representatives of the American Cancer Society and breast cancer coalitions.
2. A speaker on breast health – Host a speaker for a luncheon or evening program, inviting an expert on breast health.
3. A series of get-togethers for breast health – Hold intimate coffees at homes with qualified facilitators (including those listed in item 1. above) to enable women to express their concerns about breast and ovarian cancer.
4. Workshops on breast health – Include workshops on breast health at retreats and your district's biennial assemblies.
5. Breast health fair – Hold a fair for women in the congregation and community. Booths should cover all aspects of breast health and include the specialists listed above. If possible provide a mobile mammography unit, BSE training, and a wide variety of information.

For more information on WRJ and Social Justice, visit www.wrj.org/social-justice-home

Additional programming resource information to be provided next week.