

Local Church Ladies Think Pink

Volunteer Health State Plan, Olivet Baptist to Co-Sponsor Breast Cancer Awareness Event

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. — African-American women are more likely to die from breast cancer than all other women. To help raise awareness of the need for early detection, Volunteer State Health Plan (VSHP) has partnered with the Mother's Ministry at Olivet Baptist Church to sponsor Church Ladies Think Pink, a free breast cancer awareness event on Saturday, Nov. 7, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The event will be held at the Waterhouse Pavilion at Miller Plaza and will feature mammograms, blood pressure, glucose and BMI screenings, as well as other women's health-related services. All services are open to the community. Mammograms will be free to TennCare members.

According to a recent study in the Journal of General Internal Medicine, only 55 percent of the African-American women who participated in the study reported having mammograms in the last two years, despite recommendations from their doctors. Research points to a lack of access to health care, avoidance of care, or even a distrust in the health system as factors for the lack of screenings and, therefore, increased mortality among this population.

"When it comes to breast cancer, education and early detection really are key," said Sheila Keith, manager of community outreach for VSHP. "Although black women are disproportionately affected, we want to empower women of all ethnicities to take simple steps toward a longer, healthier and happier life."

The event will also include testimonials of breast cancer survivors, including Martha Adams, mother of Pastor Kevin Adams of Olivet Baptist Church. "As a breast cancer survivor, I feel it is my duty to educate women in my family, my church and my community on this dangerous disease," Adams said. "Through my experience, I want women to learn the importance of breast cancer prevention and to let go of their fears and misconceptions."

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Other scheduled speakers include Beth Goodman and Carolyn Whitney, presidents of the Atlanta and Memphis affiliate chapters of the Sisters Network Inc., the only national African-American breast cancer survivorship organization. The event will include music provided by D.J. Bell, performances by local vocalists and door prizes drawings.

For more information about Church Ladies Think Pink, call Anita McAfee of Olivet Baptist Church at (423) 704-6482 or VSHP's JoAnne Foster at (423) 290-7507.

About Volunteer State Health Plan (VSHP)

Volunteer State Health Plan is a wholly-owned subsidiary of BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee. Founded in 1993, the Chattanooga-based company focuses on managing care and providing quality health care products, services, and information for government programs. VSHP currently serves approximately 500,000 members.

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