

VNR

PILOT PROGRAM PROVIDES BREAST CANCER DETECTION FOR WOMEN IN RURAL AREAS OF TEXAS

Anchor intro:

Based on the most recent CDC report, more than 42-thousand women in the U.S. died from breast cancer in 2022. What if you don't have access to early-detection screenings? A new program from Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center is helping close the gap and reminding women of the importance of getting screened yearly. Melissa Whitfield with TTUHSC reports.

Voiceover:

Most days, Tamara Alexander, a breast cancer survivor, travels far from her hometown so other women don't have to. Alexander is the project manager on a team whose mission is to bring early breast cancer detection technology to women in medically underserved rural communities.

SOT

CG: Tamara Alexander, TTUHSC Bexa Project

Sometimes in life, we go through trials and tribulations, and we don't understand why. But maybe ... my cancer journey was, you know, meant to be so I could be on this side of that mountain and help other women.

Voiceover:

Alexander and her team from Abilene offer exams using a medical device called Bexa™. A part of a pilot program called "Access to Breast Health for Texans," the project is an initiative of the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center's Laura W. Bush Institute for Women's Health.

SOT

CG: Kathy Wood, Fisher County resident

I loved it. It was 15 minutes, fast and easy, nice and warm, no pain... I traveled 10 miles and got it done.

Voiceover:

Women in rural communities face barriers like travel distance, time and cost that can keep them from getting vital early breast cancer detection exams. TTUHSC brings Bexa™ exams to them — free of charge.

SOT

CG: Tamara Alexander, TTUHSC Bexa Project

Bexa™ and this program really do help find suspicious material in women's breasts at an early stage, and can help save lives very easily."

Voiceover:

Bexa™ is a portable, radiation-free, high-resolution elastography device that looks — and feels — like a computer mouse as it moves over the surface of the breast. It uses low-frequency

vibrations that can detect and map areas in the breasts that are harder or less elastic than surrounding tissue.

Bexa™ is not a replacement for mammography. Alexander says these quick, painless and effective early-detection exams encourage women to take control of their breast health and get subsequent screenings.

SOT

CG: Tadie Nowlin, Roby resident

It was nice for her to tell me right away that everything was fine. I did learn that I had some dense breast tissue, and it was nice that this machine can help see more underneath that. I will share that with my PCP, just because I haven't had a mammogram.

Voiceover:

For those who need further imaging or treatment, the Bexa™ Project offers resources for follow-up care, including telehealth consultations.

SOT

CG: Tamara Alexander, TTUHSC Bexa Project

When they leave, just the look of relief on their face and the results as they walk out the door are monumental. We've put a lot of women's minds at ease when they've left the exam site.

Reporter or Anchor On-air Tag:

Alexander is passionate about making screenings accessible to women. She believes early detection saved her life — and she wants the same for others.

The key takeaway is the importance of women getting yearly breast cancer screenings.

*(For use by Abilene area media):

For information on where the Bexa™ Project is scheduled in the 24 counties surrounding Abilene served by the Hendrick Hospital system, contact Tamara Alexander at tamara.alexander@ttuhsc.edu or visit this website:

<https://qr.bexaequityalliance.org/atbhtmembers/>

*(For use by media outside the Abilene area):

For information on where breast cancer screenings are available for women throughout the state, check the HealthyTexasWomen.org website and go to the health care programs section.