

Flushing This Week

Care On Wheels Comes To Queens

Should a 40-foot long, eight-foot wide behemoth come rumbling through your neighborhood next week, don't be alarmed. Inside is a veritable breast-health haven, fully equipped to provide women with a quick-stop mammogram, with results to follow soon.

The mobile mammography center comes care of Councilman Tony Avella (D-Bayside) and the American Italian Cancer Foundation. It will make its first stop on March 12 at

the Waldbaum's Shopping Center, located at 133-11 20th Ave., followed by a second trip to the Whitestone Shopping Center on April 9, at 135-76 Cross Island Parkway.

"I think everyone can agree that early detection is crucial in the fight against cancer and is the only path toward cancer prevention," Avella said. "The occasion will give women with little or no health coverage the opportunity to obtain a screening and to potentially prevent a life threatening disease."

Women's History:



Queens Borough President Helen Marshall (r.) and Director of Community Boards Karen Koslowitz (l.) honored District Managers of community boards in Queens as part of Women's History Month celebration at Borough Hall during a borough cabinet meeting, Tuesday, March 3. Pictured l. to r.: Susan Seinfeld, CB 11; Lucille Hartmann, CB 1; Debbie Markell-Kleinert, CB 2; Marilyn Bitterman, CB 7; Karlyn Petersen, CB 10; Marie Adam-Ovide, CB 8; and Giovanna Reid, CB 3.

AICF's mobile mammogram program itself has been around for two decades now, and has detected cancer in hundreds of women since it first started, according to Jessica Jacobs, AICF's director of cancer screening, outreach and education. Along with the bus, the program is also comprised of a "mobile unit" - a standalone mammography contraption complete with curtains for privacy, often used in senior centers.

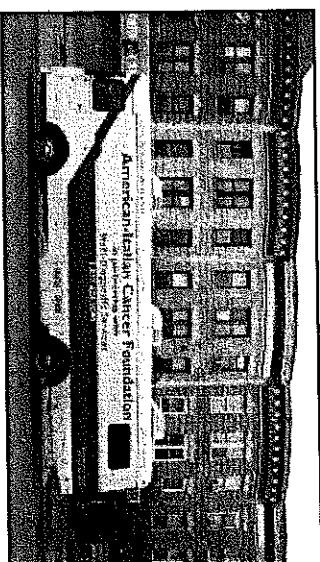
The program itself targets women lacking the medical coverage necessary to get mammograms. With little or no coverage, women can schedule an appointment to walk on the bus, and within 30 minutes be out and back into the world. Within an eight hour day, the bus can see up to 35 women.

The large medical center on wheels is split into three sections - an intake and waiting area, a mammography room and an exam table where a nurse provides a clinical exam and how-to on self-examinations.

All mammograms are then sent off site to be read by a radiologist, the results being mailed to participants. Should the worst news come, AICF doesn't leave them hanging.

"Of course we guide them to the appropriate outlets to get further treatment should it be necessary," Jacobs said.

The tricky part comes with patients that



This mobile mammography unit will come to College Point March 12.

don't have any sort of medical coverage.

"We try to refer them to the New York State Cancer Services Program as much as possible, which provides necessary treatment for people who don't have the coverage to pay for it," Jacobs said.

The bus, by all accounts, is a newcomer to the borough. Though the program has been in existence for 20 years, red tape kept AICF from providing screenings in Queens until July of last year. Still, the program continues to produce positive results.

In 2008, 14 women were diagnosed with breast cancer after obtaining AICF screenings, one of whom was a Queens resident.

This will be the mobile mammography unit's ninth visit to our borough this year. To schedule a visit, call Avella's district office at (718) 747-2137.

—Joseph Orovic