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Women urged to become breast aware during October to help minimise the threat of cancer

South Eastern Sydney Illawarra BreastScreen Service Director, Mathivanan Sakthivel, is encouraging women aged between 50 and 69 years to book a mammogram if they have not had one in the last two years.

“October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and the perfect opportunity to ask yourself, your girlfriends, mother, grandmother, sister or daughter – have you had a mammogram in the last two years? If not, it’s time to call 13 20 50,” Mr Sakthivel said.

According to the Cancer Institute NSW, one in nine women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime, but if detected early, women have up to a 97 per cent chance of survival.

Mr Sakthivel said screening mammograms can detect breast cancers before they can be felt or noticed.

“Mothers, carers and working women often don’t make time for mammograms, let alone make sure they have the health checks they need.

“It takes around 20 minutes to have a mammogram and it could save your life. So if you are aged between 50 and 69 years, setting aside half an hour every two years to visit BreastScreen NSW will give you the best chance against this disease,” Mr Sakthivel said.

Screening services are available in the following South Eastern Sydney areas:

- Royal Hospital for Women, Randwick;
- Mobile van, Westfield Eastgardens (Corner Bunnerong Road and Wentworth Avenue, Pagewood) until 14 December, 2012;
- 2/20-24 Gibbs Street, Miranda, and
- St George Hospital, Kogarah.

According to the Cancer Institute NSW, it is estimated that 4,600 women were diagnosed with breast cancer in 2011 across the State.

Even though family history of breast cancer is a risk factor, Chief Cancer Officer and CEO of the Cancer Institute NSW, Professor David Currow, said the majority of women who develop the disease do not have a family history.

“It is important to see your doctor if you notice a new lump or change in the thickness of your breast. Any change in breast size, nipple discharge or unusual redness or dimpling may also be a signs that require further examination, so don’t delay and visit your doctor,” Professor Currow said.

“Remember – early detection is your best opportunity for cure,” he said.

To make an appointment at BreastScreen NSW, call 13 20 50. For more information about breast cancer and BreastScreen NSW, visit <http://www.bsnsw.org.au>