



Department
of Health



Public Health
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To:

Clinical Commissioning Group Clinical Leads
Strategic Clinical Network Associate Directors
Local Authority Chief Executives
Directors of Public Health
Foundation Trust Chief Executives & Medical Directors
Trust Chief Executives & Medical Directors
Directors of Breast Screening Services

Cc:

Clinical Commissioning Group Accountable Officers
NHS England Regional Medical Directors
NHS England Area Team Directors

18 March 2015

Dear Colleague

Forthcoming national *Be Clear on Cancer* symptom awareness campaign

We are writing to announce the next *Be Clear on Cancer* symptom awareness campaign and to ask you to cascade this information locally. This will be a national reminder campaign for breast cancer in women over 70 and it is scheduled to run during July and August 2015.

Updates on further campaign plans will follow later in the year.

National breast cancer in women over 70 reminder campaign

1. A national reminder campaign for 'breast cancer in women over 70' will run during July and August 2015.
2. The campaign was first run nationally in February and March 2014. This campaign will similarly focus on the message "One in three women who get breast cancer are over 70, so don't assume you're past it".
3. Communication plans are still being finalised but are likely to include TV, press, digital, out of home advertising and road show events.

4. The decision to run a 'breast cancer in women over 70' reminder campaign at a national level is based on positive evidence from the evaluation of the previous national campaign that ran in early 2014. Results showed that:

- After the campaign there was high awareness of general cancer advertising (82% overall). Of those recalling general cancer advertising, breast cancer was the type of cancer most frequently recalled and rose significantly from 39% pre campaign to 57% post campaign.
- Confidence in knowledge of signs and symptoms of breast cancer increased significantly, mainly in the proportion of women claiming to be "very confident" up from 19% before the campaign to 26% after the campaign.
- Seven in ten (71%) agreed that the advertising would prompt them to visit their GP if they had any of the symptoms and six in ten (60%) agreed that the advertising would prompt them to talk to somebody close to them to make sure they looked out for symptoms.
- Overall 15% of women who had recognised the advertising claimed to have had taken action; the most common form of action taken was to make an appointment with a GP (5%).

In addition, referral activity and diagnoses for women aged 70 and over showed the following increases:

- A 67% increase in combined breast referrals, between February to April 2012 and February to April 2014; this increase reflects a 64% increase in referrals for suspected breast cancer and a 75% increase in breast symptom referrals.
- A statistically significant 25% increase in the number of breast cancers diagnosed following either an urgent GP referral for suspected breast cancer or a breast symptom referral, between February-April 2012 and February-April 2014.
- A statistically significant 31% increase in the total number of breast cancer diagnoses recorded in the cancer waiting times database between March-May 2012 and March-May 2014.

Initial analysis has been undertaken to assess the number of women in the target age range self-referring into the breast cancer screening programme during the campaign period. Early results currently show that for the six weeks in February/March of 2014, during which the campaign ran, a total of 21,607 women self-referred. This compared to 9,175 women in the equivalent six week period in 2011, when there was no campaign running. This represents a net increase of 12,432 self-referrals. Further detailed work will need to be undertaken to explore this finding in more detail.¹

Preparations

5. As for previous campaigns, NHS England will be working with Strategic Clinical Networks and other NHS stakeholders to help ensure the NHS is prepared for the forthcoming campaigns, whilst Public Health England will be working with local authorities and other key stakeholders.

¹ IOSC, December 2014

6. The NHS Constitution standard that 93% of patients should wait a maximum of two weeks to see a specialist for investigation of breast symptoms, even if cancer is not initially suspected, was not met during the period of the first national campaign in Q1 2014-15. Now we have better evidence of the likely impact of this forthcoming campaign, trusts and clinical commissioning groups need to work together to ensure that the necessary capacity is planned or available to manage an expected and possibly significant increase in demand.
7. Briefing sheets from the previous 'breast cancer in women over 70' national campaign will be reviewed and provided for GPs, nurses, practice managers, trusts, pharmacy teams, local authorities, community groups and volunteers to help them prepare for and support the campaign. You can find the previous campaign resources on the [NAEDI website](#). The updated resources will be available in advance of the campaign.
8. Please share this information with colleagues and local teams so they can think about how they can work together to help promote the campaign in your local community and ensure that services are ready to respond.
9. For more information, or if you have any queries, please contact the programme support desk beclearoncancer@nhs.uk
10. Finally, we would like to thank you for your support to date with the *Be Clear on Cancer* campaigns and look forward to working with you to deliver the next campaign.

Yours sincerely



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