



News Release

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Bluewater Health Encourages Sarnia-Lambton to Test, Treat and Give Local

SARNIA & PETROLIA – October 5, 2018 – Bluewater Health is marking Breast Cancer Awareness Month throughout October, to encourage Sarnia-Lambton residents to test local, treat local and give local.

Bluewater Health, Sarnia, is designated as an Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP) by Cancer Care Ontario (CCO), offering high quality mammography screening, physical breast examination, follow-up of abnormal screens and a reminder letter when it's time to return. The service is free and a doctor's referral is not needed.

"In November 2012, I went for a routine mammogram and before I knew it, I had been diagnosed with aggressive stage II breast cancer," says Michelle Weiss. "You'd think that after receiving this news I'd be scared, but honestly, I wasn't. I could have had a lumpectomy but I decided to take no chances and opted to have a full mastectomy performed at Bluewater Health. A month after my mastectomy, I began eight treatments of chemotherapy which lasted 16 weeks."

Test Local

Bluewater Health's Breast Assessment Program (BAP) offers improved, patient-centred, streamlined, coordinated, and timely access to mammography services for residents of Sarnia-Lambton. The BAP follows best practice guidelines established by CCO, and aims to 'fast track' women with abnormal breast findings from screening through biopsy and pathology results.

"Mammograms are excellent and reliable at detecting breast cancer early on," says Dr. Youssef Almalki, Medical Director, Diagnostic Imaging, Bluewater Health. "Breast cancers can be detected through screening mammography when they are small, with a better chance of being treated successfully. We've placed a high priority on decreasing the time from test to diagnosis following an abnormal screen, to lessen patients' anxiety and proceed to treatment as soon as possible."

Bluewater Health consistently sees more than 90% of patients for imaging, biopsy and surgery within the provincial wait time indicators.

Treat Local

For those patients receiving a diagnosis of cancer, Bluewater Health offers best-in-class treatment options. The cancer program works closely with the hospital's diagnostic departments and specialists along with the Regional Cancer Centre at Windsor Regional Hospital, and the London Regional Cancer Program to ensure all appropriate services and referrals are available to patients.

When someone learns they have cancer, it's very important they receive timely care. Wait times for diagnostic tests and treatments are a priority for Bluewater Health and the organization constantly strives to meet or exceed provincial wait time standards. Its oncology team and patient navigator work to make patients most comfortable and able to make treatment decisions. Its exceptional surgeons can perform many types of cancer surgeries, close to home, and its cancer clinic guides patients through their chemotherapy treatments.

Bluewater Health consistently treats 100% of breast cancer patients within the provincial wait time indicators.

Give Local

While government funding supports the operations and administration of hospitals, it is community donations that fund critical equipment purchases, replacements and upgrades throughout Bluewater Health. This is equipment that helps perform everything from day-to-day tests, clinical treatments, surgeries, and critical, possibly lifesaving, diagnostic scans.

“With all of the improvement made in recent years in detection and imaging, and safeguards to help minimize the patient’s discomfort, I was lucky to have gone through this ordeal with no further complications,” adds Weiss. “I’d hate to think what would have happened had I not gone for that routine mammogram six years ago. Throughout diagnosis and recovery, the staff and equipment at Bluewater Health gave me a fighting chance at defeating breast cancer. I truly can’t thank them enough.”

Michelle’s family has held a series of benefit concerts with proceeds supporting mammography at Bluewater Health, including this year’s sold-out show set for October 13. Both of the hospital’s current mammography machines are nearing the end of their lifespan and Bluewater Health Foundation is raising funds to replace them with new state-of-the-art mammography equipment. To learn more about how to give, visit www.bwhf.ca.

Bluewater Health, with locations in Sarnia and Petrolia, cares for the residents of Sarnia-Lambton. With close to 2,500 staff, Professional Staff and volunteers, Bluewater Health provides an array of specialized acute, complex continuing care, allied health and ambulatory care services. Bluewater Health’s Mission is: *We create exemplary healthcare experiences with patients and families every time.* For more information about Bluewater Health, visit www.bluewaterhealth.ca or follow us on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and YouTube.

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