



NEWS RELEASE

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Please note: The North Dakota Department of Health is offering the following story about a Women's Way Client.

Breast and Cervical Cancer Screenings Are a Family Affair

BISMARCK, N.D. – If she isn't sewing a one-of-a-kind Pendelton jacket or purse, you can probably find Juanita Giron-Vargas of Fort Totten (now living in Page, N.D.) caring for her grandchildren. Her son doesn't quite understand why his kids tend to listen better to grandma, but he thinks Juanita is doing a good job in helping to raise her grandchildren. Juanita understands how important women, including grandmothers, are to a family.

“A woman is the lamppost in a family. You bring them light and if something ever happens to them, you know...if your light goes out then the family will no longer be as strong as they were,” she said.

For Juanita an important part of caring for her family is always having her regular Pap test and mammogram. She schedules her breast and cervical cancer screenings every November to celebrate Thanksgiving and the blessing of health. Juanita uses *Women's Way* to get screened. “I've used *Women's Way* for five years and it really helps. I don't have regular insurance and *Women's Way* is there to help with the costs,” Juanita said.

Women's Way is North Dakota's breast and cervical cancer early detection program. *Women's Way* may provide a way to pay for mammograms and Pap tests. North Dakota women ages 40 through 64 may be eligible for help with paying for clinical breast exams, Pap tests and pelvic exams. North Dakota women ages 50 through 64 also may be eligible to receive help paying for mammograms.

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Visit the health department home page at www.ndhealth.gov.

Juanita's mother died from cervical cancer. She understands that some women don't get regular breast and cervical cancer early detection screenings because there are issues of modesty or they hear that mammograms may hurt. Juanita makes a blanket appeal to those women and offers to go with them to the appointment for support.

"It's just a pinch. Goodness, some people walk around for months with a toothache. I don't think it hurts that much, and in just a minute – poof, it's done," Juanita said. "In Native American culture, the women are the spokespeople. I saw my grandparents and my parents talk about issues and then the men would talk, but the men always sought the women's advice. Growing up as children, we went to our mothers for advice."

The value of a mother or grandmother's role within the family is important to Juanita. She urges women to make the time to take care of themselves so they can continue to be the guiding light in the family. She urges women to call *Women's Way* if they need financial help to pay for regular Pap tests and yearly mammograms.

Juanita looks forward to caring for her grown children and her grandchildren. She treasures every day. "I just feel joy knowing the Lord gives me another day to wake up and make a difference for someone," Juanita said.

For more information about *Women's Way*, call 1-800-44-WOMEN or visit the *Women's Way* website at www.ndhealth.gov/womensway.

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This news release and a photo of Juanita Giron-Vargas are available for download at www.ndhealth.gov/womensway.

Please note: To access archived news releases and other information, visit the North Dakota Department of Health Press Room at www.nddohpressroom.gov.