



Friend to Friend

Breast and Cervical Cancer Education, Screening and Diagnostics

EXTENDING KNOWLEDGE
Providing Solutions

Relevance

Women living in rural areas of Texas are less likely than their urban counterparts to have had a mammogram or Papanicolaou (Pap) test within the past two years. Screening and diagnostic services tend to be “disconnected” and not easy to locate or access in rural Texas, especially for underserved and older women. As a result, women in these rural areas tend to be diagnosed in later stages of breast or cervical cancer, making treatment more difficult and impairing their future quality of life.

Response

AgriLife Extension sought and obtained from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) to support the delivery of *Friend to Friend*, which is an evidence-based program. The goal is to encourage women in rural, frontier, and border counties to get regular mammograms and Pap tests for early detection of breast and cervical cancer — when the disease is most curable.

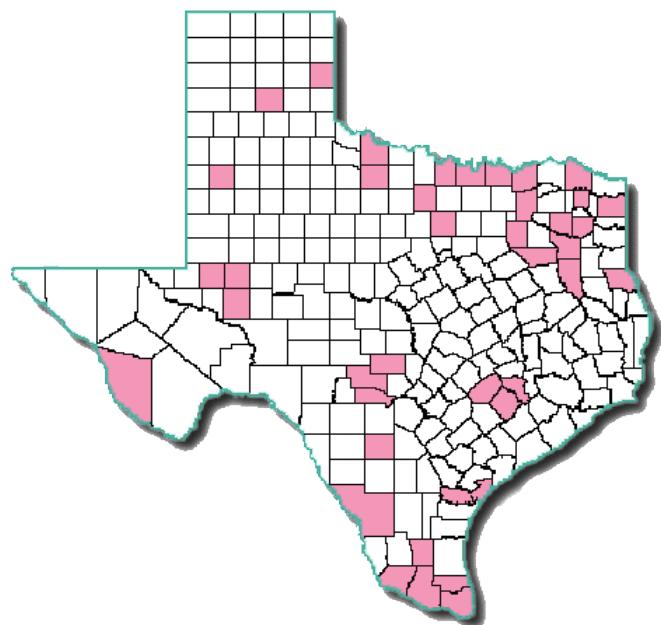


Results

In 2015, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service agents in 33 counties across the state worked with regional cancer prevention program specialists to implement *Friend to Friend* events (or, “Pink Events”) and communicate the importance of early detection to the women of their communities. Each event included forming a coalition to plan and implement an event. Each event also included a presentation by a local physician, a chance to meet and make appointments with nearby clinical sources of mammograms and Pap tests, and a discussion group for networking support and finding solutions for problems like cost and transportation. If women needed a mammogram and/or a Pap test, they were asked to sign a commitment card saying they were committed to obtaining one of these tests. Women needing assistance were asked to complete a help request form, and patient navigators then followed up to ensure services were received.

- AgriLife Extension held 38 *Friend to Friend* events.
- More than 1,550 women attended these events.
- The average age of the women who attended these events was 52 years old.
- All 890 women who attended the events completed Help Request forms, asking for support from the project specialists and patient navigators to ensure breast and cervical cancer screenings were completed as appropriate.

- AgriLife Extension established more than 30 clinical sub-contracts to support payment of services for women qualifying for assistance through CPRIT funds. These funds paid for 395 breast screenings and 148 cervical screenings. Women who were identified as needing further diagnostic testing were also assisted.
- Volunteers are essential to the success of the *Friend to Friend* project and support agents in coordinating *Friend to Friend* parties in different counties. More than 380 volunteers assisted statewide at the *Friend to Friend* events.
- The following counties participated in the *Friend to Friend* project in 2015: Armstrong, Austin, Bandera, Baylor, Brooks, Cass, Cherokee, Cameron, Colorado, Cooke, Ector, Fannin, Fayette, Frio, Gillespie, Grayson, Henderson, Hidalgo, Hockley, Hunt, Jack, Kaufman, Kerr, Midland, Montague, Parker, Presidio, Red River, San Patricio, Shelby, Smith, Starr, Titus, Upshur, Upton, Webb, Wheeler, Wilbarger, Willacy, and Wood.



Texas Counties Participating in *Friend to Friend* in 2015.



Texas voters overwhelmingly approved a constitutional amendment in 2007 establishing the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT) and authorizing the state to issue \$3 billion in bonds to fund groundbreaking cancer research and prevention programs and services in Texas. CPRIT's goal is to expedite innovation and commercialization in the area of cancer research and to enhance access to evidence-based prevention programs and services throughout the state. Under the guidance of its governing body, the Oversight Committee, CPRIT accepts applications and awards grants for a wide variety of cancer-related research and for the delivery of cancer prevention programs and services by public and private entities located in Texas. All CPRIT-funded research will be conducted in state by Texas-based scientists and reflect CPRIT's mission to attract and expand the state's research capabilities and create high quality new jobs in Texas. More information about CPRIT is available at its website, www.cprit.state.tx.us.

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating

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