

No money doesn't mean no mammogram

By LILIANE PARBOT-JOHNSON, FEELING FIT CORRESPONDENT

The lack of money to pay for needed mammograms does not have to mean a woman is kept from this breast cancer detection tool that can save her life. "Dollars for mammograms," a non-profit 501(c)(3) public organization, provides free mammograms to women over 40, who are uninsured or underinsured and who fall within the required financial guidelines. They must be permanent residents of this area, within the following zip codes: Port Charlotte: 33948, 33952, 33953, 33954, 33980, 33981 and 33983 Punta Gorda: 33950, 33955, 33982 Englewood and Grove City: 34223 & 34224, Cape Haze and Rotonda West: 33947 Placida: 33946; Boca Grande: 33921 North Port: 34286, 34287, 34288, 34289 & 34291 Venice: 34292, 34293, 34285 More information about the nonprofit organization can be found online at www.dollarsformammograms.org Application forms can be requested by writing to: Dollars for Mammograms P.O. 366 Englewood, FL 34295-0366. The application forms also are available at Charlotte County Health Department, doctors' offices, Care, Helping Hands, or can be downloaded and printed from the website. Three years ago, the organization held its first "Barstool Open" fundraiser that has become an annual event. There are prizes and free trolley rides from bar to bar – nine of them – in Punta Gorda to play nine holes of miniature golf. Tax deductible donations can also be mailed to: Dollars For Mammograms, Inc., P.O. 366, Englewood, Florida 34295-0366.

Charlotte County Health Department

The Charlotte County Health Department has three clinics. All are open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Appointments are encouraged to avoid extended wait time. The locations and telephone numbers are: Port Charlotte: 1100 Loveland Blvd., 941-624-7200; Punta Gorda: 514 East Grace Street, 941-639-1181; Englewood: 6868 San Casa Drive, 941-681-3750. The Loveland Boulevard clinic recently replaced the one on Kings Highway, which is now closed. For more information visit the website at www.CharlotteCHD.com. Click on Directory — Cancer Screening is located under the letter "C." Financial guidelines are also followed there regarding the patient's ability to pay.

Virginia B. Andes clinic - A decade ago, the St. Vincent de Paul Pharmacy was started to help people who could not afford their medications. In 2008, the St. Vincent de Paul Community Health Clinic was opened with volunteers and included the pharmacy. The name was later changed to "Virginia B. Andes Volunteer Community Clinic" to recognize a woman having made a significant contribution to this non-profit 501(c) (3) organization. The clinic offers free health care and medicine for people who are uninsured, poor and/or homeless. The clinic is at 21450 Gibraltar Drive, in Port Charlotte, and the telephone number is: 286-6553. To visit the Web site, go to: www.volunteercare.org

Support groups help - A number of support group help in bearing the toll, both financial and emotional, brought on by breast cancer and other devastating health situations. Among them, the Susan G. Komen organization is well known for its fund raising events, "Race for the Cure." Information about the local organization can be found online at www.komenswfl.org.

The Uplifters - A breast cancer support group, the Uplifters Club, has resumed monthly meetings at the Royal Palm Retirement Center the first Saturday of each month. Please contact Beverly Clayton 941-629-7310 for more information.

Look Good ... Feel Better - A free program that teaches women in active cancer treatment ways to deal with the appearance-related side effects of treatment. This program is offered jointly by the American Cancer Society, Personal Care Products Council Foundation and the National Cosmetology Association. Call 800-227-2345

Cancer Resource Center gift closet - This program is provided by the American Cancer Society, and provides specific items to cancer patients at no charge. Gift Closet items available include wigs, mastectomy prostheses and bras and American Cancer Society literature. The Florida Division participates in the Pantene Beautiful Lengths Wig Campaign. Pantene Wigs are provided to patients when available.

Reach to Recovery - Provided by American Cancer Society, this is a program that helps patients with breast cancer cope with their diagnosis, treatment, and recovery. The program pairs a breast cancer survivor with a recently diagnosed patient who has similar issues. Each volunteer is specially trained to help the patient express their feelings, verbalize her fears and concerns, and be an impartial sounding board for questions and matters that may be affecting them. Contact may be either a personal visit or a phone call based on location. Please contact Beverly Clayton 941-629-7310 for more information.

Contact the American Cancer Society for more information by calling 800-227-2345 or online at cancer.org.