

Gaol or Jail does it matter

Taking the BreastScreen service to the inmates

Case for change

The aim of the BreastScreen program is to detect breast cancer when its small and all eligible women (40 years and over) in NSW should have equitable access to the program. The NSW Cancer Plan, Goal 2 and The BreastScreen NSW Business Plan 2015-2018 Objective 1.2 refers to the provision of the service to priority populations (Target groups). These include but not limited to Aboriginal, CALD, disabled, mental health and incarcerated women.

The inmates of the Kempsey Correctional Services have no access to the BreastScreen service and this inequity needed to be addressed.

Goal

The aim of the project was to offer all eligible women incarcerated in the Kempsey Correctional Services easy access to the BreastScreen program.

Objectives

- To make the BreastScreen service available to the inmates.
- Marketing strategies to increased awareness of the BreastScreen Program to be focused on the inmates.
- 100% of appointments to be filled (25).

Method

On interviewing the staff working for Justice Health at the Kempsey Correctional Service it was apparent that the inmates did not place their health as a high priority.

Justice Health could not support taking the inmates to the nearest fixed screening site.

Inmates expressed a high level of interest in participating in the breast screening program.

Diagnostics

Level of commitment among Justice Health and Correctional Services to providing the service to the inmates was assessed.

Determine the number of eligible inmates agreeing to participate in the program.

Consideration was given to the risk (if any) to the BreastScreen staff interacting with the inmates.

Options on how to provide the service to the inmates were explored.

Results

The overall goal of the project was achieved as easy access to the program was provided for one day at the Kempsey Correctional Service.

25 appointments were available on the day – 100% were filled with an additional two women accommodated at their request – 27 women attended.

- 7/27 inmates had a screening mammogram on the day – one inmate declined as she was unwell.
- 20/27 staff employed by Correctional Service and Justice had a screening mammogram.
- 11/27 women were aged between 50-69.
- 16/27 were aged between 40-49.
- 23/27 women had never had a mammogram before.
- Feedback from the inmates was very positive.
- Feedback from the staff involved in the coordination of the day was very positive.
- Staff and inmates participating in the program expressed a high level of satisfaction in being able to attend an appointment that was easy to access.
- BreastScreen was made aware that the key messages of the program were not reaching the eligible staff working in the facility – there was confusion among the staff about target age, eligibility, cost and level of risk of breast cancer.



Planning and implementing solutions

- High level of commitment to provide the service was demonstrated by the Facility Management Team.
- After inspection of the facility and in collaboration with the Correctional Services' staff it was decided to take the bus into the facility.
- A suitable location was identified inside the gaol – flat site, powered, easy to access, spacious parking location.
- BreastScreen staff supported the proposal.
- 8 inmates registered to have a mammogram prior to the arrival of the bus.
- Educational BreastScreen resources were provided to Justice Health nurses to promote the program.
- Request to make appointments available to the staff working in the facility was made. Agreement was reached to make appointments available to the inmates as a priority and unfilled appointments were to be offered to the staff.

Sustaining change

- As the risks identified in taking the bus into a Correctional Service have been mitigated, the bus is scheduled to visit the Grafton Correctional Service in September.
- Partnership between Correctional Services, Justice Health and BreastScreen has been developed and sustained.
- The visits to the gaols will be included on the annual schedule for the bus as some of the inmates change each year and more women become eligible to participate.

Acknowledgements

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Conclusion

Vulnerable communities will participate in screening services if access is made easy.

Correctional Services and Justice Health in collaboration with BreastScreen NSW North Coast will work in partnership to improve the health of the inmates.

The residential address of the women participating in the program is immaterial – Gaol or Jail does it Matter, its about bringing the service to the communities.