



The Wisconsin Pink Shawls presented the Dream the Cure Conversations program in May at the Share the Care Conference. The Conversations program is being offered to the tribal communities throughout the state. These conversations focus on how sound breast health education is important to our communities. In fact, breast cancer is a major cause of cancer death in American Indian women. Even though native women have lower breast cancer rates than non-native women, they are more likely to be diagnosed at a later stage, when the cancer is more advanced and harder to treat. Also breast cancer rates vary in different parts of the country. Many native women do not get breast cancer screening, even when it's available to them. The belief that cancer *can't be beat* is one reason native women might avoid screening.

We hope that your community is open to having us come up to present our conversations program to your women. Our outreach program is supported by the Forest County Potawatomi, the American Cancer Society and the Spirit of Eagles. There is no charge for the program and women are awarded \$15. Walmart gift cards once they have their age appropriate screening.

We've held Conversations at the Oneida Health Center, Menomonie, Crandon, Carter and during the Share the Care Cancer Conference in May. We have spoken to more than 200 women, we were all surprised by the comments made during our conversation and concluded we must do a better job of educating our women on this disease. I've attached a copy of the flyer we used to promote our visit. Our program is based on the Kohl's Conversation for the Cure model that we've been presenting for 2 ½ years in Southeastern Wisconsin. We have reformulated their program to fit our native communities. The Kohl's program is funded in Southeastern Wisconsin and does not carry through to the rest of the state. We have had such good results here, that we knew the training would work if we could take it to the reservation communities.

Pink Shawl Dream the Cure Conversation Program

Presented by The Wisconsin Pink Shawls Dream the Cure Conversations are an educational session where women can talk openly about breast cancer and the impact it can have on their lives. The goal of the program is to encourage women to get regular breast health screenings, thereby increasing survival rates throughout the tribes of Wisconsin.

The small group education sessions are held in familiar settings that are safe and easily accessible. Locations include: schools, churches, businesses, health centers, libraries, city agencies, community centers, beauty shops and public housing complexes in Wisconsin.

Participants can talk openly about breast cancer and discuss barriers that prevent women from getting breast exams, such as fear, cultural or financial concerns, or not having enough time.

Light refreshments are served. Participants will also learn about the benefits of yearly screenings. At the end of the Conversation, participants will have the tools to break down these barriers. Other key takeaway messages include: knowing your personal risk of breast cancer, understanding screening recommendations, engaging in healthy lifestyle behaviors to reduce risk and empowering women to be their own health advocates.



Each Conversation is moderated by a Pink Shawl Dream the Cure Conversations Leader. These Leaders, while volunteers, are highly trained, and serve as the bridge between community members and available breast health services. Conversation Leaders are uniquely qualified as a trusted source because of the community ties they have already established. Leaders usually live in the communities where the Conversations are taking place and understand what is important to those communities. Additionally, Leaders are able to communicate in a language participants are comfortable with and can incorporate cultural customs to help participants cope with stress and promote ongoing breast self-awareness. Women who participate in the program, go for the appropriate screening (mammogram or clinical breast exam) qualify for a gift card incentive that is mailed to them after the test is validated.

If you'd like to learn more about The Pink Shawl Dream the Cure Conversations and the importance of breast health, contact us at pinkshawl@att.net.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if you'd like to schedule a date when we could come to hold our Conversations in your community. We plan to hold Conversations at this year's Share the Care Cancer Conference, but not all women attend-so we are hoping to make it to each tribal Health & Wellness Center around the state. We would love to come to you. Let me know if you have any question

Sincerely,

Carol Cameron – Program Manager

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WI Pink Shawl Initiative

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