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## **Cervical Health Awareness Month: A pap test is the first line of defense to prevent cervical cancer**

(Name of Town/City) - January is Cervical Health Awareness Month, and women ages 21-74 across Colorado are encouraged to start the year by talking with their health care providers about scheduling a Pap test. A Pap test is the first line of defense against cervical cancer. When it is found early, more than 93 percent of women survive cervical cancer.

**“When you find out can be just as important as what you find out,” said (organization spokesperson). “Cervical cancer usually doesn’t have any signs or symptoms, so a routine pap test will tell you if you have a problem.”**

**“I have such peace of mind now that I got screened,” said (local participant). “I realized that to take care of my family, I had to take care of myself first.”**

“Cervical Cancer Awareness Month is the perfect time to remind women that these tests could be the difference between life and death,” said Dr. Tista Ghosh Department Interim Chief Medical Officer. “Women’s Wellness Connection offers free screenings. We can help women stay cancer-free, even if they have not been able to afford these tests before.”

Every year in the United States, approximately 12,000 women are diagnosed with cervical cancer, and about 4,000 women die of the disease. Latinas and African-American women are at higher risk for developing and dying from cervical cancer.

The Women’s Wellness Connection offers FREE cervical cancer screenings and any necessary follow-up testing to Colorado women. The program offers free cervical cancer screening and diagnostic services to women ages 21 through 64 who have little or no health insurance and meet income requirements. To be eligible for the Women’s Wellness Connection, the women must earn less than 250 percent of the federal poverty level and have no health insurance or have health insurance with high deductibles or co-pays.

### **About Women’s Wellness Connection**

Women’s Wellness Connection provides free, confidential breast and cervical cancer screenings - clinical breast exams, Pap tests and mammograms - to eligible women at more than 120 sites through cooperative efforts with multiple statewide providers. Women’s Wellness Connection’s statewide hotline number, 1-866-951-WELL (9355), is made possible through an in-kind donation from the American Cancer Society. ACS staff members operate the hotline to answer questions, provide additional information about the program and help women make appointments with local Women’s Wellness Connection providers.