



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 20, 2012

MEDIA CONTACT

Darlene Oliver
(312) 942-4232
Darlene_Oliver@rush.edu

The Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force Launches Beyond October! – A Free, City-Wide Mammogram Screening Initiative

Chicago, IL August 20, 2012 – This fall, the Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force will launch “Beyond October!” -- a free city-wide mammogram screening initiative with the goal of getting 500 uninsured women screened at health institutions across Chicago. In Chicago, an African American woman’s chance of dying from breast cancer is 62% greater than her White counterpart. Chicago has the lowest screening rate in the country for women in Medicare and the State program that provides free mammogram screenings to uninsured women currently covers only a fraction of those in dire need of these services, which leads to long waitlists.

“One of the main goals of the Task Force is to help women of color gain access to high quality and affordable mammogram screenings. We also want to make sure that we raise awareness about breast cancer, not only in October, but during the entire year. Our Beyond October! initiative allows us to meet both of these goals,” said Darlene Oliver, Associate Director of the Task Force.

The kickoff for Beyond October! will take place on November 1, 2012 at St. Benedict the African East Parish, located at 6550 S. Harvard from 10 a.m. until 1p.m. Women will be able to start signing up for free mammograms at the kickoff event and throughout the month of November by calling the Task Force’s office at (312) 942-1899. The Beyond October! initiative will conclude on December 1, 2012 with a celebration event at the National Museum of Mexican Art, located at 1852 W. 19th Street, Chicago, IL 60608 from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m.

BACKGROUND:

The Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force was formed in March 2007 in response to research by the Sinai Urban Health Institute, which showed at the time, that African American women in Metropolitan Chicago were dying from breast cancer at more than twice the rate of their White counterparts. Working collaboratively with over 100 of its community and healthcare partners, the Task Force determined that systemic lack of access to quality mammography and treatment for African American women could be the root cause of the disparity. The Task Force’s mission and all of its programs are designed to address these systemic barriers to care and thereby reduce the racial, ethnic, and class disparity in breast cancer death rates in Metropolitan Chicago (Cook and Collar counties).