

Executive Summary

Introduction

The Austin Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure was established in late 1999 to spread the life-saving message of early detection and to support breast cancer screening and education programs in Central Texas. The Affiliate covers five counties including Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis, and Williamson. These five counties make up an area of 4284 square miles and encompasses a population of slightly more than 1.5M residents. The Race for the Cure, held the first Sunday of November, is the signature fund raising event of the Affiliate. It has grown to an attendance of approximately 22,000 participants, recorded during the 2008 Race. The Affiliate has granted out over \$5M in the ten years of its existence to help women in the service area. The services funded include screening, diagnostic services, treatment, navigation during treatment, mobile mammography, emergency funds needed for everyday expenses and support services for women in treatment for breast cancer.

Every two years a Community Profile is completed in order to gather and organize information to create a snapshot of the state of breast health and breast health services in the Affiliate service area. This report is intended to serve as a roadmap to the services currently funded and gaps in those services for the five county service area. It is also intended to outline program plans on how the Affiliate will seek to meet the needs of the identified groups which should lead to change in behavior and reduced breast cancer mortality. A review committee was convened to help with the creation of questions to be asked of grantees, health providers who are currently not grantees of the Komen Austin Affiliate and focus groups. Face-to-face interviews were held with the Affiliate's current list of grantees; a survey was sent to non-grantee service providers via Survey Monkey; and five focus groups were held with women from varying ethnicities and locations within the service area. The focus groups represented a very valued source of information because these are women who had not received help from the Austin Affiliate and did not know about the services offered. Their breast health knowledge was limited at best and their responses on the questions gave us great insight into the myths and barriers that still exist in the Austin Affiliate service area. The list of questions asked and the responses from each of the various groups can be found in the Appendix of this document. After data collection, the responses were pared down to look for similarities and differences. Response data was then compared to data sources provided by Komen Headquarters and other sources. These include but were not limited to C.A.N.C.E.R Control Planet, The Texas Cancer Registry, Thomson-Reuters © 2007, The Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Center of the CDC and the National Cancer Institute.

What is clear from the data review is that African American women continue to be at an increased risk of death from breast cancer due to many key factors that include, but are not limited to, financial barriers, social support, fear of having breast cancer, myths or misconceptions about breast cancer and a later stage diagnosis. Hispanic women, while gains have been made, continue to suffer from incredibly low screening rates, financial barriers and cultural issues.

Demographics:

The Komen Austin Affiliate service area consists of Bastrop, Caldwell, Hays, Travis and Williamson Counties. Within these communities, there is a total population of approximately 1,514,323 people, with roughly 473,140 women between the ages of 20 and 65. This data is

courtesy of Thomson Reuters © 2007 reports. The population is largely comprised of White and Hispanic inhabitants.

Bastrop County:

When examining the particulars of this county, there are several factors that stand out. The majority (32.2%) of residents of this county have a high school diploma while the second largest majority have some college (27.8%). Bastrop is the second largest county in area at 898 square miles. Much of this area is rural and very sparsely populated. Bastrop is the most populated city followed by Elgin. Bastrop County is comprised of 49.4% women, ages 20 and older. The breakdown of this data can also be seen in Table 1. Bastrop County is predominantly white in ethnicity with 63.4%. Hispanics make up 26% of the population followed by Blacks at 8.3%. Bastrop County has an 11.7% poverty rate and a 17.4% uninsured rate based on data from the 2007 County Information Project. This county has seen the largest gain in the Black population since the 2006 Community Profile was released by the Austin Affiliate. In 2006, the Black population comprised approximately 5.8% of this County's population. This is the largest Black population by percentage of any of the service area. This county will be the focus of efforts by the Austin Affiliate in 2009/2010 because of the breast cancer mortality statistics of the Black population. Another factor facing the residents of this county is the lack of cancer treatment services. Patients must travel to a neighboring county such as Travis or Hays.

Caldwell County:

This county represents the poorest of the five in the Austin Affiliate's service area and the smallest in area at 548 square miles. The population count difference between Whites and Hispanics continues to lessen as more Hispanic families choose this area because of the affordability of housing. Whites make up the largest percentage of residents at 46.3% according to Thomson Reuters © 2007. Hispanics represent 44.8% of this county's population. Similar to Bastrop County, this area has no treatment for cancer, no public transportation and is impacted by poverty. Caldwell County, the most rural in the service area, ranks first on each of these indicators, having a 19% poverty rate and a 23.9% uninsured rate. Women make up the majority of the population and the vast majority of residents have a high school diploma (34.6% as reported by NCI in 2007 data.) The number of residents with some college is much lower at 23.6%. The largest two cities are Lockhart and Luling with these town populations comprising 67% of the total population of the county. Again, women diagnosed with breast cancer here must seek treatment in a neighboring county. The overall health of this county is very low. The factors affecting this are poverty rates, education levels, and the uninsured rates.

Hays County:

Hays County has demographics that are greatly influenced by the fact it is a college town. The largest percentage of women there are between the ages of 0 – 19 according to Thomson Reuters © 2007. Whites makes up the largest majority of the population at 60.5%; Hispanics make up the other large ethnic group at 33.5%. It is a very educated town with percentages of residents having college degrees (29.2%) and an equally large population having advanced degrees (28.8%) which includes the faculty at Texas State University, a state university in the largest city of San Marcos. A statistic that is in contradiction with the education level of Hays County is the number of uninsured women. According to Thomson Reuters © 2007 data, almost one-third (29.6%) of the women living in Hays County, ages 18-64, are uninsured. The health of a community is typically represented by the education level of its residents. The large number of uninsured women is not understood at this point and we could not find data that

indicated if the data was skewed by the student population of Texas State University. Hays County has 6.9% of its families living in poverty with a median household income of approximately \$51,000/year according to Thomson Reuters © 2007. Hays County provides excellent screening and treatment options for women and many of the neighboring counties come here for treatment and screening.

Travis County:

Travis County is the home to the capitol city, Austin, and is the location of many universities, including the University of Texas with a student body enrollment of over 50,000. Travis County has the largest population of the Austin Affiliate service area with approximately 998,000 residents. Travis County, like Hays County, has a large percentage of young women (26.4%) between the ages of 0-19. This number is strongly influenced by the number of young women attending the many colleges in Travis County. Travis County is predominantly white (51.7%), followed by Hispanics (32.6%), and a Black population of 8.0% according to Thomson Reuters © 2007. The Black population has shrunk as a percentage of the population from the 2006 Community profile (9.2%). Austin was home to many of the Katrina evacuees who have subsequently gone back to Louisiana or have found more affordable housing in other cities. The uninsured female population, ages 18-64, is second only to Hays County in numbers (24.7%). Again, like Hays County it is unclear if this data includes the co-ed population of the large universities. Travis County is, like Hays, a very educated county with over 40% of the residents with college degrees or higher. Almost 27% of the population has some college or an associates degree. Travis County is also a county struggling with families living in poverty. Poverty data from the Texas Association of Counties published in 2007 shows that 14.6% of residents live in poverty in Travis County. Travis County has a large number of cancer treatment facilities and screening facilities. The public transportation, while somewhat limited, does provide the means to get women to and from appointments.

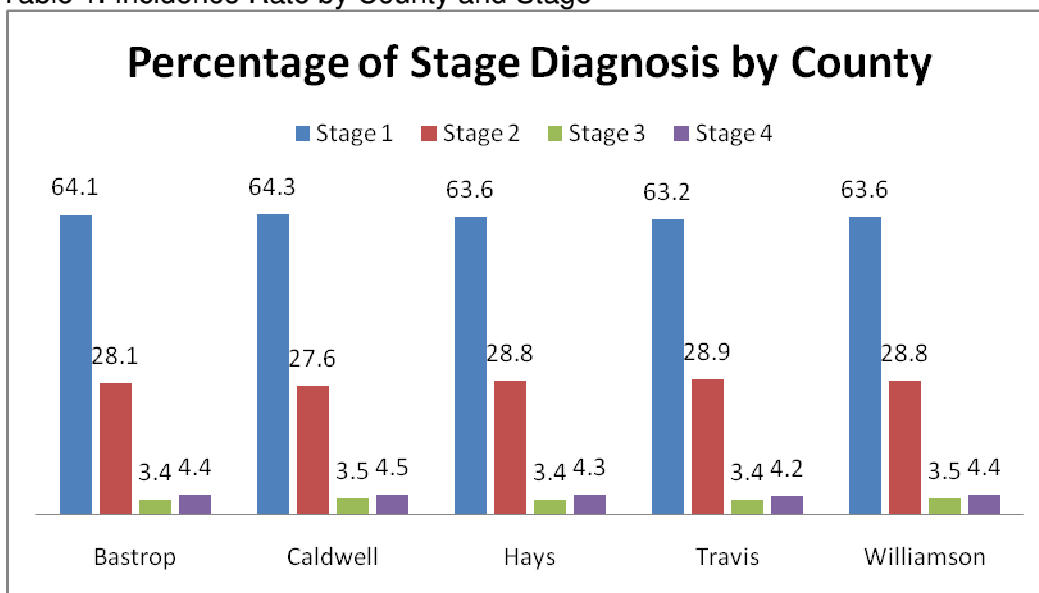
Williamson County:

Williamson County is the most wealthy county of the five in the Austin Affiliate Service area. It is home to many large corporations and is growing in population. It was ranked by the Census Bureau in an article published in 2008 as one of the top 11 counties in the state to see sustained growth. Williamson County was somewhat surprising in that there is only a 6% poverty rate but 21.2% of the residents are uninsured according to data from the 2007 County Information Project. Several new hospitals have opened since the 2006 Community Profile. Williamson County is also predominantly white (51.7%), but the Hispanic population (32.6%) is growing because of the job availability in blue collar industries. The uninsured rate is high because of the number of workers in the service industries; these workers are employed by the wealthy of this county: landscaping, domestic help, childcare, etc. Williamson County also has the largest population in the Austin Affilte service area of young women ages, 0-19, at 30.7% according to the Thomson Reuters © 2007. There are several smaller colleges in this county, but this number is indicative of the employment opportunities in this county. The largest percentage of the young womens group is Hispanics (38.9%). Williamson County is limited in the number of doctors that will see uninsured patients. There is no public transportation and getting from one place to the next in the largest county by area can be challenging for women needing screening or treatment.

Breast Health Statistics:

According to data from the Texas Cancer Registry for 2009, in three of the five counties that make up the Austin Affiliate service area, (Williamson, Hays and Travis), an estimated 841 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and of that total, an estimated 139 will lose their battle with this disease. Data was not available for Caldwell and Bastrop Counties because data was based on populations of over 100,000 and these counties did not qualify. Data from Thomson Reuters © 2007 reports that 268 new cases of breast cancer were estimated in these two counties. Fourteen deaths were also estimated from that same 2007 report for these two counties. All five counties showed the largest percentage estimates of breast cancer was reported at Stage 1. Stage 2 was the second most popular response, but Stage 4 was found more often than Stage 3.

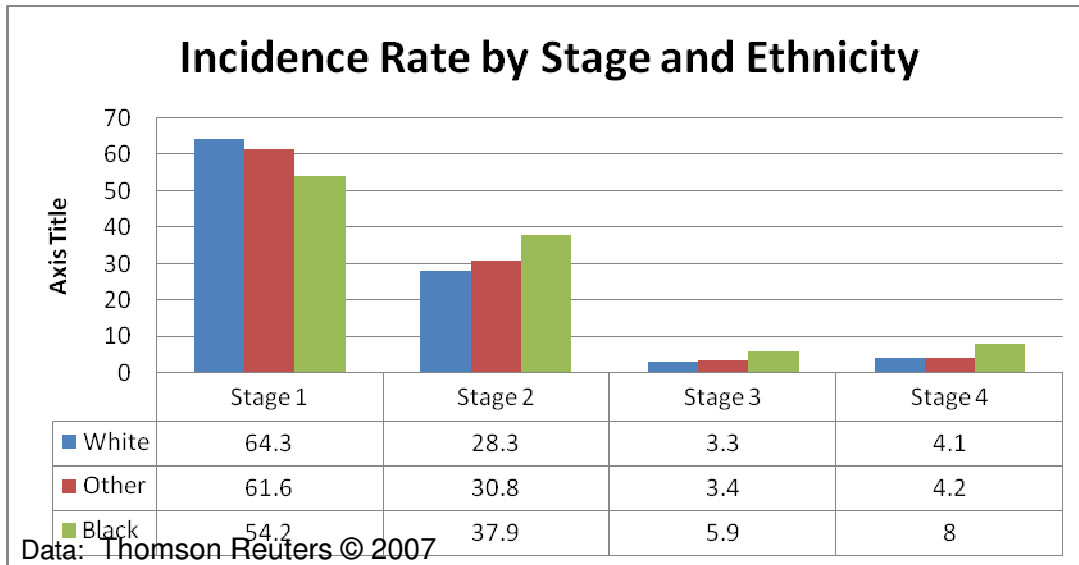
Table 1. Incidence Rate by County and Stage



Data: Thomson Reuters © 2007

In continuing to break down this data by ethnicity, Black women are diagnosed the latest and therefore have poorer outcomes. This is pictorally represented by Table 2 below.

Table 2: Incidence Rate by Stage and Ethnicity



Caldwell and Bastrop Counties have the highest percentages Stage 4 diagnoses which the education, poverty rate and uninsured data would predict.

Program and Services:

Nine medical facilities were identified within the Travis County borders which serve as a point of first contact for indigent women needing breast health care. This includes two hospital networks (each with several locations), Travis County Community Health Clinics, and four other primary health clinics offering services to under and uninsured individuals. Shivers Cancer Center, which partners with Austin Cancer Center, is the primary facility for cancer treatment in Travis County to the poor and uninsured individuals. In addition, there are numerous organizations which exist for the purpose of providing support and education to those affected by breast cancer. Two of the counties, Bastrop and Caldwell, have no cancer treatment options within their borders; treatment must be sought at the nearest facility located in either Travis or Hays County. Williamson County is now home to three hospital networks. Two hospitals have opened in Cedar Park in the past two years, increasing options for in-county care. In addition to these, three organizations were identified as being a point of first contact for indigent individuals.

Only one organization is established as a Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program (BCCCP) provider in Travis County, two organizations are established as providers in Caldwell and one is established as a provider in Bastrop, Hays and Williamson Counties. This program provides state money to agencies for free screenings, case management to women with suspicious findings after a mammogram and for medical treatment after a diagnosis.

Screenings are provided by the mobile mammography unit, which is based in Travis County. The mobile unit is in high demand and serves the entire Komen Austin Affiliate service area.

The challenges facing the Austin Affiliate are simply that demand has outstripped services. The current economic times resulted in less money for grantees during the 2009/2010 cycle and as a result, several services were cut back: the mobile mammography unit had to cut over 25 locations out of its schedule; more and more women are calling the office needing free screenings; many have lost their insurance and are in treatment. Everyday expenses have become more difficult for many, but especially for women battling breast cancer. Many of the

Affiliate grantees have been advised to start looking for additional funding for their programs as economic times remain unpredictable at best. Williamson County is faced with a shortage of surgeons willing to see uninsured patients and the list grows as that population grows.

Community Data:

Focus groups, online surveys to community organizations and interviews with current Komen Austin grantees revealed a number of key findings with regards to breast health in the five county service area. Themes that emerged related to fear of breast cancer diagnosis and treatment, the method of communicating the importance of breast health care to different populations, body image, flexible transportation, the lack of breast surgeons willing to see indigent women and options for young women who reported finding suspicious lumps. The discovery of this information during the data gathering portion of writing the Community Profile has critical implications because it determines the direction the Austin Affiliate will take in the next several years and who the Affiliate will award grant funds to for the 2010/2011 cycle of funding. From the fourteen grantee interviews, the seven Survey Monkey questionnaires returned and five focus groups, the information, while some were similar to past years responses (transportation, fears of being diagnosed or not wanting to know), others were completely new (body image issues of seeing a physician and weight being the focus of discussion, young women not feeling empowered to discuss a suspicious finding at a college clinic.) Black women, again, are the focus of great concern especially the stage of diagnosis and their mortality rates. As shown above in Chart 2, the poorer counties of Bastrop and Caldwell have the worst outcomes for these women. Bastrop County is home to the largest percentage of Black women in the Affiliate service area and their numbers continue to disappoint.

Recommendations:

Based on the findings of the Community Profile from data gathered from interviews and research, the Austin Affiliate developed priorities which align with their strategic plan. The Strategic Plan will be used to improve and guide the grant process and education programs for Komen Austin in the next several years. These priorities include:

- reducing breast cancer morbidity and mortality in the Black community for the entire five county service area;
- increasing the screening rates for Hispanic women;
- and reducing mortality rates in rural counties.

For a copy of the Strategic Plan, please refer to the Appendix of this document.