



## CANCER PREVENTION & RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TEXAS

Award ID:  
PP170091

Project Title:  
Empower Her To Care Expansion(EHC4): Increasing Access to Breast  
Cancer Screening and the Continuum of Care for Underserved Texas  
Women

Award Mechanism:  
Evidence-Based Prevention Programs and Services

Principal Investigator:  
Joseph, Bernice

Entity:  
The Rose

### Lay Summary:

Need: Rural Texas counties have a greater cancer burden than their urban counterparts due to access-to-care barriers (being uninsured, poor and with limited transportation) and lack of infrastructure to carry out prevention programs. With more than 80% of Texas designated rural by federal government standards, 3.3 million people live in rural communities. Moreover, most uninsured Texan adults are low-income workers: nearly 70% of uninsured adults are in a working family, and 40% live below the poverty level. Despite healthcare reform, Texas still has the highest number of uninsured, non-elderly adults in the nation at just over 20%.

Rural Texas women are more likely to have breast cancers diagnosed at a later, more invasive stage thus reflecting higher breast cancer mortality rates. According to the Texas Cancer Registry, breast cancer mortality rates for women are higher than the Texas' rate of 20.5 per 100,000 in 18 of the 38 targeted counties (ranging from 34.9 – 21.3 age-adjusted rate per 100,000).

The Rose seeks renewal grant funding in the amount of \$1,500,000 over 24 months to support the successful progress and expansion of the CPRIT-funded Empower Her ®to Care project. This Project (the Empower Her to Care - EHC4) will increase the delivery of breast cancer screening, diagnostic procedures and patient navigation services to 3,300 underserved women in the existing 34 targeted counties while expanding to four new East Texas counties.

Overall Project Strategy: The two-year project will serve 3,300 underserved/uninsured women, age 40 and above, targeting women who have never been screened or are not regularly receiving annual mammograms and live within 38 Texas counties. The Empower Her® to Care program's current service area includes Austin, Brazoria, Burleson, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Hardin, Harris, Jasper, Jefferson, Liberty, Matagorda, Montgomery, Newton, Polk, Sabine, San Augustine, San Jacinto, Shelby, Tyler, Waller, Washington, Wharton, Angelina, Brazos, Trinity, Walker, Leon, Robertson, Madison, Orange, Grimes, and Nacogdoches counties. The new Empower Her to Care Expansion (EHC4) will add four counties (Houston, Cherokee, Rusk and Panola) that are currently not well served by the CPRIT portfolio under preventive care.

Services will be provided through The Rose's digital Mobile Mammography Program and through partnerships with established community clinics, physicians and other organizations that offer education/outreach efforts and help to recruit eligible patients who need screening or diagnostic care. Diagnostic testing, coordinated care and access to breast cancer treatment will be provided at either of The Rose's two locations (Houston, TX) or by way of collaborative health systems such as M.D. Anderson Cancer Centers or Houston Methodist hospital systems. By addressing transportation, financial and system barriers, the EHC4 project will increase access to breast cancer screening and follow-up diagnostic services – a continuum of care unique to medically underserved and rural communities.

To address barriers, The Rose will apply the following evidenced-based models to promote cancer prevention and control: 1) reduce structural barriers through mobile mammography, 2) reduce out-of-pocket costs for services and transportation (CPRIT-funded care), 3) apply client reminders for appointments; 4) reducing structural barriers through patient navigation services to ensure timely access to diagnostic testing and breast cancer treatment.

Specific Goals: The EHC4 expansion project will serve 3,300 unique clients (Y1=1,600 and Y2=1,700 over 24 months needing access to mammography screenings, diagnostic follow-up, coordinated care and access to treatment with the overall goal of reducing breast cancer mortality in Texas. Breast cancer screening guidelines comply with the current national guidelines of the Health Resources & Services Administration (HRSA), American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), National Comprehensive Cancer Network and the American College of Radiology (ACR) and Society of Breast Imaging (SBI) recommending that annual mammography screening, beginning at age 40, saves the most lives.

Significance and Impact: With CPRIT partnership, the EHC4 project will help to increase breast cancer screening awareness, promote the availability of CPRIT program funding to increase access to care, deliver services and coordinated care, and strengthen safety-net systems. Since implemented in 2010, the original CPRIT Empower Her to Care (EHC1) grant has served 11,115 Texas women over 69 months. Of those served, 288 breast cancers were detected and 115 (40%) of those cancers were detected through first-ever mammograms. The CPRIT-funded Empower Her to Care grant is making a significant impact in Texas, saving lives and improving safety-net systems that will sustain care for generations of families.