

Emerging Topics in Breast Cancer and the Environment Research Symposium
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Title: **Adolescent Peer Education Breast Cancer Awareness Project**
Category: **Risk Communication Efforts**
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Abstract:

The objective of this project is to create a peer-based, single-lesson module to communicate known and suspected risk factors for the development of breast cancer to an adolescent population. Marin Breast Cancer Watch has conducted a previous formative assessment. Results of teacher surveys, focus groups with adolescent girls and mothers, and community interviews have established local needs for this program. MBCW has developed a unique adolescent breast cancer awareness curriculum in partnership with the Tamalpais Union High School District and peer education experts. A Community Advisory Panel is contributing professional guidance and the advocate viewpoint.

This project is designed to address adolescent breast cancer informational interests via a developmentally appropriate peer education module presented to co-ed, 9th – 10th grade students. Through interactive activities and facilitated dialogue, trained peer educators will disseminate health awareness messages focused on modifiable risk factors for breast cancer. MBCW is currently conducting curriculum trainings with peer educator teams at Sir Francis Drake High School. The pilot phase will involve a sample of 300 student participants. The expanded field-testing phase will involve 900 students in three district high schools.

Program evaluation will include outcome and process components, with emphasis on outcomes during the pilot phase. Through pre- and post-test surveys, changes in students' knowledge about breast cancer and attitudes toward the practice of healthy behaviors will be evaluated. Focus groups will compare the perspectives of peer educators and student participants, segmenting participants who have experience with family members affected by breast cancer. The process evaluation will determine the nature and extent of the implementation of the program objectives. This method of "triangulation" – using multiple approaches to assess outcome – will enhance the reliability and validity of the overall evaluation.

The strategic goal is to establish a responsive model for communicating lifetime breast cancer risk factors to adolescents.