

Chestnut Hill Local

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Ex-Hill physician favors Thermography over mammograms

By Audrey Levine and Len Lear

The biggest issue with the technique is that it is not covered by insurance, but for Yardley resident Dr. Wendy Warner, who formerly lived in Chestnut Hill, Thermography is more functional in detecting developing breast cancer tumors than other methods.

"Thermography is a technique that uses measurement of heat to detect inflammation and developing tumors," said Dr. Warner, who owns Medicine in Balance, a private practice based in Langhorne, and is Chairperson of the Ob/Gyn department at Lower Bucks Hospital in Bristol. "There is no radiation involved and no 'squishing' (of the breast). It is used in place of mammography to do routine screening for breast abnormalities."

Thermography utilizes infrared imaging cameras that "read" the entire infrared range of the electromagnetic spectrum and produce images. Medical Thermography uses infrared technology to provide an image of the body's physiological responses. It does so without the use of radiation, contact or other invasive means. There are no risks or side effects to the test.

"I've known about the method for nearly 20 years, but didn't actively start recommending it until about five years ago," she said of the thermal imaging technique. "As for being more comfortable using it, many patients like the fact that it doesn't require irradiation, and no women will complain about not getting (their breasts) squished."

Through the technique, a thermal imaging camera transmits information about the body's temperature to a computer that changes the patterns to images. From there, doctors can note alterations in patterns to determine any problems.

One of the biggest advantages of thermography, Warner



According to Dr. Warner, Thermographic Diagnostic Imaging in Marlton, New Jersey, run by Philip Getson, D.O., a Board-certified family physician, and his wife, Liesha Getson, a Board-certified Thermographic Technician who has imaged over 1000 patients (both seen here), operate "the premier place to have it (Thermography) done in the Greater Philadelphia area." (More information: www.medicineinbalance.com or www.cdiinj.com)

said, is the fact that there is no radiation used. She said it is a more functional test with a lower false negative rate. Unfortunately, she said, if something abnormal is found, other tests still have to be done for confirmations.

"Since it is a functional test and not an anatomical one, if there is an abnormality found, you will usually need to get either an ultrasound for MRI of the area in question to look for a cyst or tumor associated with the finding on the

thermogram."

Despite the benefits of the technique and the fact that more doctors are starting to use it, Dr. Warner said, the issue of its not being covered by insurance has been a significant deterrent. "The biggest issue is that it isn't covered by insurance, and most doctors will only order what insurance will cover."

Still, the technique has been found to help with diagnosing conditions such as chronic pain syndromes, fibromyalgia, thyroid dysfunction and sinus-related disorders, among others. *Article from her work with*

Physician favors Thermography over mammograms

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Thermography, Dr. Warner is one of only a few physicians in the Eastern U.S. who is Board-certified in Holistic Medicine, which focuses on chronic illnesses and on viewing the body as a whole in promoting the prevention of disease rather than just treatment. In addition, among several other principles, Holistic Medicine believes in a practitioner-patient relationship as conducive to the healing process and in an innate healing power, which allows patients to help in the healing process.

"Basically, I feel that although conventional medicine does a great job with acute illness and trauma, it doesn't do a very good job with chronic illness," Dr. Warner said. "I am also very frustrated with the specialization of conventional medicine, as it leads care providers to no longer see the

person as a whole."

Dr. Warner received medical training at the University of Tennessee and had her residencies at Orlando Regional Medical Center and Temple University Hospital. Aside from her private practice, she is a member of the Board of Directors and teaching faculty of the American Board of Integrative Holistic Medicine. In addition, she is a fellow of the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology, and is certified in Obstetrics, Gynecology and Holistic Medicine.

Medicine in Balance, which Dr. Warner opened in 1990, includes conventional women's healthcare services — including birth control counseling, Pap tests and gynecological visits — in addition to hormone replacement, herbal medicine and holistic medical consultations.

For more information on Warner and her practice, visit her Web site



Dr. Wendy Warner, formerly of Chestnut Hill, has been the Medical Director of the holistic center at St. Mary Medical Center in Langhorne; Medical Co-director of the Mother Bachmann Maternity Center, and Chairperson of the Ob/Gyn department at Lower Bucks Hospital in Bristol.

at www.medicineinbalance.com.

Another medical practice which uses Thermographic Diagnostic Imaging (TDI) is the Health & Wellness Center in Marlton, New Jersey, which uses infrared imaging of the breast, neuromuscular system, thyroid, dental, TMJ and sinus regions to assist in the early diagnosis of problems associated with these areas.

The center is run by Philip Getson, D.O., a medical Thermographer since 1982. A Board-certified family physician, Dr. Getson is also an Assistant Professor of Medicine in the Department of Neurology at Drexel University College of Medicine (formerly Hahnemann Hospital). A recognized expert in the diagnosis and treatment of Reflex Sympathetic Dystrophy/Complex Regional Pain Syndrome, Dr. Getson often uses Thermographic imaging to assist in this diagnosis.

Dr. Getson's wife, Liesha Getson, is a Board-certified Thermographic Technician who has

imaged over 1000 patients. Liesha is a Holistic Health Counselor, Reiki Master and Certified Integrated Energy Therapist who has studied many alternative approaches to healing.

Thermography has become even more important in light of recent events surrounding the use of mammography and the position of the American Cancer Society. As explained in a front page article of The New York Times on Oct. 20, 2009, Dr. Otis Brawley, Chief Medical Officer of the Society, stated that the "medical profession had exaggerated the benefit of cancer screening." While the Society continues to recommend mammograms, there is debate as to their effectiveness in the diagnosis of breast cancer. They issued a statement saying: "Mammography can miss cancers that need treatment, and in some cases, finds disease that does not need treatment."

More recently, on Nov. 16, 2009, the U.S. Preventative Services Task Force Breast Cancer Screening Recommendations for the General Public were released, changing a long-standing position regarding mammography. Their new recommendations include:

- Begin screening at age 50 (formerly 40).
- Screen every other year (formerly annually).
- No screening after age 75.
- Physicians should stop teaching self-exam.
- Benefits of physician-based physical exams were questioned.

Interestingly, the USPSTF's evaluation stated that "Rather than benefit from screening, women without cancer may incur harm when undergoing mammography, additional imaging and biopsies."

On the other hand, studies have shown that Thermography has a

higher degree of success in identifying breast cancer in women under the age of 55 and has been shown to be extremely effective when combined with clinical breast exams and anatomic testing for women over 55.

According to a report in Time Magazine on April 28, 2003, the American Cancer Society is quoted as stating, "Breast cancer is the leading cause of death in women between the ages of 40 and 44. Therefore screening should begin on women in their early 20s, since most lethal breast cancers can take approximately 15 years from onset to time of death."

For more information about the Getsons' Health & Wellness Center, call 856-596-5834 or visit www.thermographicdiagnosticimaging.com or www.tdiinj.com.



RESCUED FROM GARBAGE CAN: Pure white except for a black birthmark on her nose, Blanche is a gentle and strikingly beautiful long-haired, blue-eyed female who was pulled from the bottom of a garbage can in Nor-



'WOMEN'S HEALTH WEEKEND': Spring: Inner Fling, a "Women's Weekend of Health and Healing," will be held at Seva Retreat at The Elkins Estate, 1750 Ashbourne Rd. in Elkins Park, on March 5 through 7. Offering a wide selection of workshops, private spa services, dancing, drumming, and red tent temple, the retreat also offers a respite for women who would prefer to relax, read a book or walk the beautifully landscaped 40-acre estate that was once a residence for the Dominican Sisters of St. Catherine de' Ricci. More information at www.sevaretreat.org or by calling 215-635-1714. Seen here are organizers, from left, Ettel Dobson, Amy Ragsdale, Rayzel Raphael and Mary Ruttenberg.