

York Central newest breast screening facility

BY CHRIS TRABER
Staff Writer

York Central Hospital has become a frontline outpost in the battle against one of the most common and deadliest forms of cancer threatening York Region women.

The hospital formally became an Ontario Breast Screening Program site Thursday, one of 32 GTA locations and the 105th in Ontario.

The program's objective is to reduce breast cancer deaths in providing high quality screening services to women 50 years and older.

The York Central site will enhance existing breast screening services through the hospital's mammography service.

"Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer and the second leading cause of cancer deaths for women living in York Region," commissioner of regional health services and medical

officer of health Dr. Helena Jaczek said. One in nine women is expected to develop the disease in her lifetime, she noted, adding early detection as a result of participating in breast screening programs does save lives.

The program makes screening easily accessible. Women may be referred by a physician or book their own appointments.

In addition to doctor examinations and screening services, the program offers educational resources and automatically enrolls patients in its database.

The recall system reminds participants to renew appointments, usually every two years.

Since 1990, the program has screened more than 500,000 patients and includes a mammogram (breast x-ray) and a breast examination by trained practitioners. Women with abnormal screens are followed through to diagnosis.

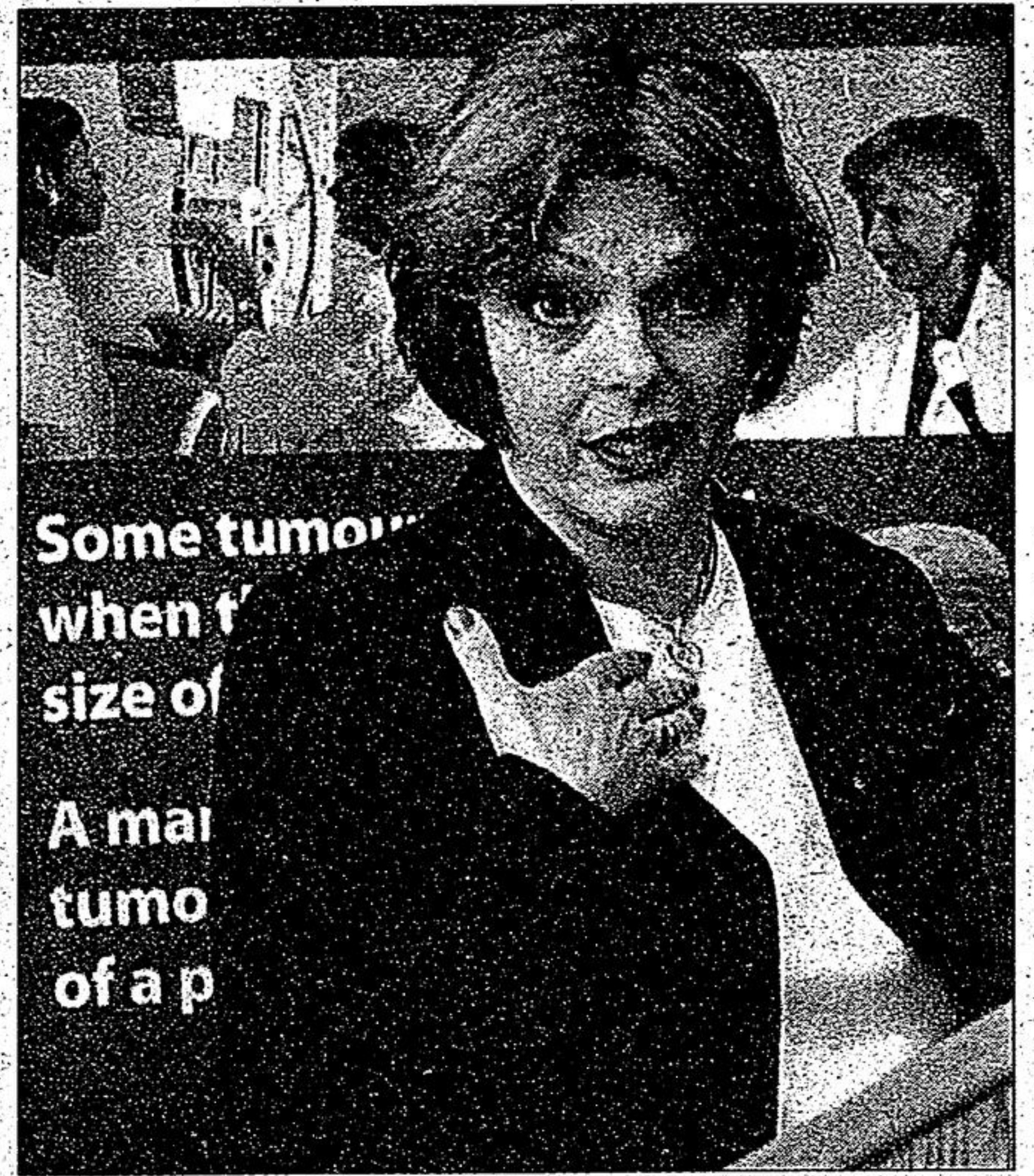
"Regular breast screening can find cancers early when they are small and less likely to have spread," surgeon and former hospital chief of staff Dr. K. Rama Bhat said.

"With this new program, we hope to catch undetected breast cancer before it spreads to the lymph nodes or other parts of the body. The smaller the cancer, the easier it is to treat and the better the long-term prognosis for the patient."

The Ontario Breast Screening Program is operated by Cancer Care Ontario and funded by the Health and Long-Term Care Ministry.

Women are eligible for the program if they are Ontario residents, 50 or older, have no history of breast cancer or breast implants, have not had a mammogram within 12 months and are free of acute breast symptoms.

For information, call 905-883-2004.



STAFF PHOTO/STEVE SOMERVILLE

Beverly Fredrickson gave an emotional talk about beating breast cancer, part of a media conference at York Central Hospital in Richmond Hill.

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