

The best defense against breast cancer



When a bad cold aggravated Mary Gonzales' asthma, the Kaiser Permanente member made an appointment to see her allergist.

“Susan Salas was the receptionist who greeted me,” she says. “I gave her my membership card, and she told me, ‘Oh Mary, you’re due for a mammogram. Let me make an appointment for you.’”

“I told her, ‘I’ll get it done, I’ll make the appointment,’” Gonzales recalls. But Salas persisted, joking, “I’m not letting you out of here until you make that appointment!”

That persistence proved to be a lifesaver for the 71-year-old. She had her mammogram a week-and-a-half later and learned she had a lump in her breast. An ultrasound and biopsy followed, and Gonzales was soon scheduled for surgery to remove the cancerous mass.

[Watch Mary tell her story \(from our Care Stories website\):](#)

Catching problems early is a hallmark of breast cancer treatment at Kaiser Permanente. Our regions across the country hold 7 of the nation’s top 10 scores for regular breast cancer screening among Medicare members, according to the [National Committee on Quality Assurance’s](#)* 2011 Healthcare Effectiveness Data and Information Set (HEDIS®). NCQA accredits and certifies a wide range of health care organizations and manages the evolution of HEDIS®, the performance measurement tool used by more than 90 percent of the nation’s health plans.

Now cancer-free, Gonzales credits Salas with saving her life. “I’m really happy she pushed me to get my mammogram, because I probably would have waited, and it might have been too late,” she says.

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness month. That makes today a perfect time to learn when you need [screenings for breast cancer or other cancers](#).

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