

Barton doc outlines breast cancer facts

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Even without a family history or other factors, nearly 13 of out every 100 women will get breast cancer. While family history is the No. 1 risk factor, 85 percent of breast cancer cases involve people with no family history.

The good news is the number of people diagnosed with breast cancer and those dying from it are declining. In large part this has to do with better screenings, improved surgical options, as well as advanced radiation and chemotherapy treatments.

Still, the American Cancer Society predicts there will be 231,840 new breast cancer cases this year and 40,000 deaths because of the disease.

These are stats that Amanda Weavil shared with Soroptimist International of South Lake Tahoe last week as part of what was Breast Cancer Awareness Month. Weavil is an obgyn with Barton Health.

Women between 50 and 55 are most at risk, while more white women are diagnosed with the disease. However, more black women die from breast cancer, Weavil said.

Modified risks – things women may have some control over – include:

- Breast feeding – decreased risk
- More than two alcoholic beverages a day – increased risk
- Obesity – increased risk

- Physically active – decreased risk
- Oral contraceptive for more than five years – increased risk
- Menopause after 55 – increased risk
- Menstruation before 12 – increased risk
- Never having kids – increased risk
- Smoker – increased risk
- Abortion – no bearing
- Antiperspirants – no bearing.

Tomosynthesis is the newest technology for testing for breast cancer. It's a type of mammogram. Barton will have the technology after the first of the year. The machine is being paid for by the Barton Auxiliary.

Barton Women's Health, who Weavil works for, will be bringing on a third obgyn this month.

While the American Cancer Society came out with new recommendations in October when it comes to what age to begin breast screens (age 45), when to stop having them annually (55) and said self-exams are not worthy, Weavil said not all medical organizations are in agreement. The American College of Surgeons and American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology are expected to issue their guidelines after the first of the year.

For Weavil, she is sticking with the old regulations until the other two organizations weigh in. That includes the first mammogram at 40 and monthly self-exams.