

## **Mobile Breast Screening Coach Coming to a Community Near You**

### **By Kathryn Lyzun**

The Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP) mobile coach is on the road again, heading out for the travel season in Northwestern Ontario. From April to October the coach visits 30 communities from Wawa to the Manitoba border and north to Red Lake, providing breast screening services close to home for women age 50 and over.

The coach was introduced to the Northwest 17 years ago and is the only service of its kind in Ontario. Roughly the size of a Greyhound bus, the coach is fitted with state-of-the-art digital mammography equipment that allows onboard technologists to screen women and transfer the images quickly to Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre, where they are read by a Radiologist. Most women receive their results directly or through their family physician within two weeks.

### **Have you made your appointment?**

Nearly 8,500 women in Ontario will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year. Regular breast screening can find cancers that are still very small, greatly increasing a woman's chance for successful treatment.

Dr. Donald Henderson is the Radiology Coordinator with the OBSP Northwest. He says women need to know that simply being a woman and getting older are the two most important risk factors for breast cancer.

“It's true that some women have an elevated risk for developing breast cancer, like those with the BRCA1 or BRCA2 genes, or women with a first degree relative (mother, sister, or daughter) who has had breast cancer,” he says. “But most women who develop breast cancer do not have a family history of the disease. The majority of breast cancers arise in women with no known risk factors.”

Cancer Care Ontario recommends all women age 50 and older participate in regular breast screening every 2 years.

If you are a woman age 50 or older, call the Ontario Breast Screening Program today to book your appointment for a free breast screen. Call (807) 684-7777 or toll-free at 1-800-461-7031. It could save your life.

Donations to the Northern Cancer Fund of the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Foundation support initiatives like breast screening. Ken Bittle, chair of the Health Sciences Foundation notes that the mobile coach symbolizes donations at work. “Women across Northwestern Ontario can access state-of-the-art screening like digital mammography, increasing their chances of finding and treating breast cancer at an early stage. That's the difference donations make,” he says.