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Fighting cancer one call at a time

Andrew Kirk, OF THE RECORD STAFF

Obstetrician and gynecologist Dr. Stephanie Singer is among the top 10 percent of physicians in Utah for success in screening patients for preventable diseases, according to research done by SelectHealth and Intermountain Healthcare. That was news to her. Singer is a full-time physician with a clinic in **Newpark** at Kimball Junction. She's independent and not affiliated with Intermountain Healthcare.

SelectHealth tracks client claim filings to see which care providers are succeeding in preventative medicine and rewards them for it, explained Marcina Robertson with the company's provider relations department.

Robertson gave Singer the Excellence in Healthcare Award Thursday for her office's "high percentage for breast cancer screenings among SelectHealth members in 2008."

The recognition was given to 70 other clinics throughout the state for breast cancer screenings as well as asthma care, diabetes care, cervical cancer screenings, colon cancer screenings, childhood immunizations, adolescent immunizations and customer service.

SelectHealth reminds women to get their screenings and supports clinics that follow up with patients, Robertson said.

"Early diagnosis is the best cancer treatment," she added. "They're simple solutions to long-term health care."

Singer and medical assistant Susan Granger are both committed to preventing cancer.

"I've seen enough breast cancer in my career. I've seen the devastation. We're militant about getting screenings done," Singer said.

Many initial tests can be done in clinics, but getting patients to come back in or go to Salt Lake City for follow-up tests can be difficult if irregularities appear, she explained.

"There is no reason people should have cervical cancer these days," Granger said.

Women should have pap tests and mammograms done annually because the testing isn't perfect and something could get missed one year and caught the next. If patients are only tested every few years, that leaves a lot of time for uncaught diseases to develop, Granger said.

"Susan is our general, our 'pap police,'" Singer joked.

The imperfect nature of the tests should not make patients dismissive of them, Singer said. That only means they should be performed regularly.

"Mammography is the best there is," she said. "If someone says no, I give them a lecture."

In addition to making sure her patients receive notification of mixed results and the need for follow-up tests, Singer makes reminders for herself to call 30 to 60 days later to make sure they got done.

That makes her a good fit for Park City, where people are interested in good health. Patients regularly bring magazine and journal articles with them to appointments to ask questions about things they've learned, she said.

"I think this area is more likely to follow-up (with tests) than the indigent population. People here care," she said.

[Photo:](#)

[Dr. Stephanie Seinger and midwife Danielle Demeter of Park City Gynecology display their 2008 Excellence in Breast Cancer Screening award from SelectHealth they received Thursday.](#)

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