

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS



Free screenings for skin cancer : Local dermatologists donate their time to first annual Road to Healthy Skin Tour

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So many people showed up that some were turned away from a free skin cancer screening event at La Cumbre Plaza on Wednesday. The screenings were sponsored by the Santa Barbara Cancer Center as part of the Skin Cancer Foundation's Road to Healthy Skin Tour.

In its second year, the Road to Healthy Skin Tour travels to cities across the country offering free full-body screenings. The screenings are done in a converted bus with two exam rooms, one at each end.

According to Christine Brown, wellness manager at the Cancer Center of Santa Barbara, the physicians are found by the Skin Cancer Foundation ahead of time, in the city the bus will be visiting, and donate their time.

Ms. Brown told the News-Press that the dermatologists "do a full body scan on each patient, head to toe, and explore the skin and moles looking for irregularities, blemishes, visual signs of potential skin cancer."

"If they find anything suspicious they encourage people to do a follow-up appointment with a local dermatologist."

"Skin cancer is preventable and it starts with being safe in the sun and using sunscreen," said Ms. Brown, "and also annual screenings are important (for those who may have cancer) because early detection is key to receiving treatment and becoming cancer-free."

Annalise Dusell, 25, said she decided to get a screening after a dermatologist told her to get some moles checked out. "Since I don't have insurance right now, this free (screening) is helpful," said Ms. Dusell.

Pearl Francis said she read about the screenings in the News-Press last week so she "plugged it in to my calendar."

"I came to the screening because when I was younger I used to spend a lot of the time in the sun using baby oil and the tin foil," Ms. Francis, 43, said.

"I also have blonde hair and blue eyes so I think I'm a good candidate and want to get checked out," she added.

Upon exiting the screening bus, Ms. Francis, who showed no signs of skin cancer, said the exam "was very professional, very fast and it was not invasive or scary in anyway."