

Prevention

Volunteers Offer Free Skin Cancer Screenings

By Brenda McHugh

Why are local dermatologists and other health-care workers volunteering their time to provide free skin cancer screenings in West Palm Beach?

For Dr. Josh Berlin, with Dermatology Associates of the Palm Beaches in Boynton Beach, the answer is easy: "I cannot stress enough how important dermatology screenings are by a board-certified dermatologist. Most skin diseases, if caught early, are easy to treat.

"It is estimated that a common precancerous lesion, known as actinic keratosis, affects 1.3 million Americans a year. If this goes untreated, it has the potential to turn into a common form of sun-induced skin cancer that has the potential to metastasize to other parts of the body."

Berlin cited one of his most memorable cases. A 25-year-old, the mother of a 6-week-old baby, came to him with acne. He persuaded her to have the rest of her skin checked for any suspicious growths.

"She first hesitated, as she thought she was too young to have a skin cancer," Berlin said. After a complete exam, Berlin noticed, and biopsied, an atypical mole on her back — an early form of melanoma. "She later sent me a beautiful letter, thanking me for saving her life so that she could watch her little girl grow up.



Dr. Josh Berlin and several other specialists have volunteered their time for May's Skin Cancer Screening Tour, which is sponsored by the Skin Cancer Foundation and Doak Dermatologics, a division of Bradley Pharmaceuticals.

"There is no substitute for a thorough skin cancer surveillance examination by a dermatologist," Berlin said.

That is why he and several other specialists spent a part of May, Skin Cancer Awareness Month, volunteering their time to work the MDV (Mobile

Diagnosis Vehicle) Skin Cancer Screening Tour, sponsored by the Skin Cancer Foundation and Doak Dermatologics, a division of Bradley Pharmaceuticals.

For more information on future tour stops, visit www.skincancerscreeningtour.com/tour.htm