

## Local Company Develops Blood Test for Breast Cancer

Phoenix-based Provista Life Sciences Rolls Out New Tool to Valley Physicians

**A PHOENIX COMPANY** recently introduced a new tool in the fight against breast cancer.

Provista Life Sciences LLC developed a blood test that can detect breast cancer early, when patients have a much higher survival rate.

"This is not a genetic test," says Caroline Hardy, director of clinical studies for Provista Life Sciences.

Instead, with an 88 percent accuracy rate, it tells doctors if a patient has cancer, even before it can be seen with a mammogram, the company says. The test is meant to be used in conjunction with, not as a replacement for, mammograms.

Mammograms have an overall accuracy rate of 76 percent for women 40 and older. And for those women between 40 and 50, the accuracy rate drops to 67 percent because their breast tissue is denser.

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Have Fun for a Good Cause  
THIS MARCH, THE 2008 SAFEWAY INTERNATIONAL WILL HOST nearly all of the top 100 professional golfers from the LPGA's official money list, including Lorena Ochoa, Laura Diaz and Jeong Jang.

Proceeds from the tournament will benefit Banner Health Foundation cancer programs and other local charities. More than \$11 million in charitable contributions have been made since 1983.

The tournament runs March 24 through March 30 at Superstition Mountain Golf and Country Club.

More than 110,000 spectators are expected for the tournament week.

General admission tickets are available at all Arizona Safeway locations for \$20. Children 17 and younger are admitted for free. Weekly Tournament Tickets (admission all week) are \$50.

**DETAILS:** [superstitionmountain.com](http://superstitionmountain.com) or [safewaygolf.com](http://safewaygolf.com).

The BT Test, or Biomarker Translation Test, finds multiple cancer-related proteins in the blood and uses an algorithm combined with the patient's medical profile to help physicians make an early diagnosis.

Mammograms only pick up tumors of 5 millimeters or more, which means the tumor has been growing for at least four years, says Dr. Christa Corn, a Phoenix breast surgeon and medical adviser for Provista Life Sciences. The BT Test can detect it earlier, allowing the patient to go for more frequent mammograms, MRIs and ultrasounds.

"Then we're looking diligently so we can find it before it grows," Corn says. "Many [patients] don't even need chemo. If we can find it small, we can treat it with the minimal amount of trauma to the patient."

The survival rate is 95 percent if the tumor

found is less than 1 centimeter, she adds.

The company rolled out the test to Valley doctors in late December. Only about a dozen local physicians are trained to prescribe it, but the company plans to expand throughout Phoenix and into other markets. A list of doctors is available at [provistals.com](http://provistals.com).

Insurance doesn't cover the \$395 fee, but as more doctors order it, the company hopes that will change. Flexible spending accounts can be used to cover it.

Cave Creek resident Andrea Black, an administrative assistant for Provista Life Sciences, was one of 435 women in the BT Test clinical trials. Two of her friends, ages 42 and 48, died of breast cancer, leaving families behind.

"I have three kids," Black says. "I think that's a small price to pay to save your life."

≡ GERI KOEPEL

WITH AN  
**88%**  
ACCURACY RATE,  
IT TELLS DOCTORS IF A PATIENT HAS CANCER, EVEN BEFORE IT CAN BE SEEN WITH A MAMMOGRAM



Dr. Stephanie Kramer, MD

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For an appointment, please call 480-632-2004 or visit [ewwmg.com](http://ewwmg.com) and click on Appointment Request.

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