

Cosmetic tattooing option for cancer survivors

Areola repigmentation an option for women who have mastectomy

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City of Delafield – Once the medical and physical battle with breast cancer is over, women are often left with emotional scars that time alone will not heal.

A Delafield-based business offers options for women who must cope with the physical changes resulting from the treatment plan required to regain their health.

Lynn Duncan Permanent Cosmetics provides intradermal pigmentation, a tattooing process most commonly used for permanent makeup such as eyeliner, eyebrows and lip color. But the service also has a paramedical application for people who are dealing with the fallout from cancer.

For many women, breast reconstruction surgery after a mastectomy leaves them without an areola and nipple, making the process feel incomplete.

Duncan offers these women an alternative with areola repigmentation.

"I'm able to make it look more natural and realistic than some of the surgeons. I'm able to make sure the edges are feathered and do some shading; if there is no nipple, I can do three-dimensional tattooing to make it look like

there is one," she added.

"Women are not aware of the fact that they can have this done," Duncan said.

Many of the women seeking the procedure come either through doctor referral or word of mouth, Duncan noted.

The procedure appeals to women of all ages.

"Every woman wants to feel complete and natural," Duncan said.

"It is one of the most rewarding experiences for me. Women tear up; it's the final step of the long journey they have gone through," she said.

Duncan said the procedure can be performed about six months after the surgery.

"We have to make sure all the scars are healed and the nipple is healed before tattooing; we have to wait for the doctor to give the OK," she said.

The repigmentation is done in two visits; the procedure is completed in the first 90-minute visit and any necessary tweaking is accomplished in the second visit.

"It's a cosmetic tattoo, not any more complicated than that as far as the healing process," she noted.

The cost of the service is \$295 per breast.

"However, when I get a referral from the doctor, it's generally covered with the

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For more information on Duncan's services, call (262) 470-0077 or visit her Web site at www.lynnuncanpermanentcosmetics.com/

treatment plan. If he includes repigmentation, my services are covered with that treatment plan," Duncan said.

"I'm also a registered occupational therapist, meaning I am a registered healthcare professional. That's another reason surgeons refer people to me, too," she added.

Duncan said she sees about 30 women a year for breast repigmentation.

"A lot of male doctors don't understand the significance of this procedure; they don't understand the importance to women of having this done. Men just don't get it, the emotional impact it makes," she explained.

"It's something women need to know is available, and it looks extremely natural," Duncan said.

Dr. Kayt Havens, director of Women's Health at the VA Hospital, and formerly at West Allis, refers patients to Duncan.

"I think women are glad to know there's something positive in the process of their breast cancer journey, a way to normalize their body

again," Havens said.

Feedback from women who opt for the procedure has been positive, Havens said.

"Especially women a little farther out from the breast cancer experience, so their lives are normalizing, and this is another piece to feel like their body looks normal again," she said.

Maria, 53, sought out Duncan for areola repigmentation after a mastectomy.

"I felt like it completed me and made me feel a little more whole, even though you do feel different. For me it was a wonderful, great service," she said.

Maria, who lost one breast to cancer, said she had the repigmentation done on both sides so it would look the same.

"I would say that if a person wants to feel as best as they can in order to feel back to the same way of life, I found it to be the ideal completion. It's just the ticket," she offered.

Arlyce Lopina, 50, of Pewaukee is a breast cancer survivor who went to Duncan for cosmetic tattooing for eyeliner and on her eyebrows.

"I had breast cancer and went through chemotherapy, and then you lose all your



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Lynn Duncan

hair," she said. "You feel ugly enough without hair, and you don't even feel like putting on makeup; you're tired and going through an awful lot. I lost my eyebrows and my eyelashes thinned.

"It made a world of difference. She did a great job. It made such a difference."