

## The November RAMble Report By Susan Chandler, Ph.D., R.N.

Despite 32° temperatures, 25 people were in attendance for the November RAMble: Walking for Wellness at Stony Park Fashion Park. Massey surgical oncologist Raphael Louie, M.D., spoke to the group about the importance of screening for breast cancer by having regular mammograms.

He shared that in the U.S., one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer during their lifetime. Breast cancer, when detected early, is not only treatable but also curable, he explained.

He also said we have really good screening tools – mammograms, 3-D mammograms and MRIs, which make early detection possible.

Dr. Louie also addressed the confusion about screening recommendations. If a woman has never had a breast biopsy and doesn't have a personal or family history of breast cancer, they are considered to have an average risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer. For this group, the American Cancer Society (ACS) recommends having a yearly mammogram, beginning at age 45. After age 55, mammograms can be spaced out to every other year, unless their risk status changes. Also, the ACS does not have a cut off age at which point mammograms can be stopped. Dr. Louie said breast surgeons and surgical societies are more conservative due to treating younger women with breast cancer and therefore recommend beginning breast cancer screening at age 40.

He also stressed that women should have a conversation with their family doctor every year about recommendations based on their individual and family health histories. He

suggested the conversation include at what age to start screening as well as when it's safe to begin spacing out the yearly mammogram to every other year. With regard to MRI screening, he stated those are usually reserved for younger women and those with a known genetic predisposition.

Each RAMble begins at 8:30 am, with a five minute health talk, followed by a brief warm up led by



physical therapist faculty member Mary Shall, Ph.D., and a fun walk at your own pace, accompanied by VCU Health providers. At the conclusion of the RAMble you are invited to take part in Nutrition & Diabetes Refresh, a 30 minute educational discussion led by nutritionist Chelsea Smyth, R.D.

**Join us for the next RAMble on December 20 as Massey genetic counselor John Quillen, Ph.D., discusses the importance of knowing your family health history.**