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Van to offer homeless TB, cancer tests

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STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE -- To address the issue of breast cancer and tuberculosis in the city's homeless population, the not-for-profit organization Project Renewal unveiled the ScanVan at City Hall yesterday.

The 40-foot-long white van, adorned with a rainbow motif, will visit the five boroughs to offer free testing to homeless people. The organization expects it to hit Staten Island sometime next month, at locations to be determined.

"Among homeless people, access to mammograms and other breast health care is virtually nonexistent," said Christie Williams, the group's chief development officer.

He added that homeless people are more at risk of contracting tuberculosis, an infectious disease that typically attacks the lungs, than the general population.

The \$650,000 van was funded mostly by the City Council, and aims to serve 5,000 people a year. Once a diagnosis is made, the organization will initiate follow-up treatment and offer help in signing up for Medicaid.