



Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
MILWAUKEE, WI
PERMIT NO. 1555



collective
voice

STAND UP AND SPEAK OUT

FALL 2004

wbcc mission

The Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition brings Wisconsin voices together to Stand Up and Speak Out about breast cancer with:

- ✓ **Education** – spotlighting critical breast cancer issues
- ✓ **Collaboration** – empowering through strategic alliances
- ✓ **Legislation** – influencing policymaking.

to contact wbcc

414-963-2103
1-888-295-2622
wbcc@standupandspeakout.org

continued from page 7

Mary Lazich
State Senator
28th Senate District

Congratulations to the Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition in celebrating ten years advocating a cure for Breast Cancer. Since 1994, the Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition has been successful in raising awareness and advocating for breast cancer research giving hope to family, friends, and those diagnosed with breast cancer. It is estimated that approximately three million women are living with breast cancer in the United States and 39,800 women will die from the disease this year. I applaud the coalition's efforts raising awareness for increased breast cancer research and treatment.

Access to quality health care and continued research for breast cancer must be a priority in Wisconsin. Many citizens are living with cancer and too many people die of cancer each year. We have an obligation to Wisconsin cancer patients to aggressively pursue cancer research and affordable, easy access to medical care. With the help of the Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition, it is my hope that cancer becomes a preventable and treatable disease rather than one that is often terminal.

As a member of the Joint Finance Committee, I supported Assembly Bill 351 both in committee and on the Senate Floor. Assembly Bill 351 allows Wisconsin taxpayers to contribute to breast cancer research by selecting an income tax check-off on annual income tax returns. AB 351 passed both houses of the Wisconsin Legislature and was signed into law April 6, 2004. I am hopeful that the tax check off and more awareness about breast cancer will lead to greater research and cures for cancer.

We can take pride in Wisconsin's cancer facilities and their research, treatment, and focus on wellness. The Medical College of Wisconsin has recently received a \$1.2 million grant from the National Cancer Institute to study surveillance care for breast cancer survivors. I commend the Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition for its leadership and assertiveness in breast cancer advocacy. Thank you for your relentless effort.

past president
DAWN ANDERSON

president
KAREN MAYNARD

vice president
ELLEN VANDER HEYDEN

treasurer
BRIDGET FASSETT

board members
BONNIE ANDERSON
RHONDA DENEKA
PEGGY FOSTER
MILDRED LEIGH-GOLD
MARGE LISS
DEBRA RAND FELDMAN
LINDA WEIDE

founding members
LINDA KOHLENBERG IRWIN
ELAINE NELLES
KARLA TILDAHL

newsletter editor
MARY LAVELLE

Moving? Please send your address changes to:

Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition
P.O. Box 170031
Milwaukee, WI 53217

or email: wbcc@standupandspeakout.org

Welcome to our special Legislative Issue of Collective Voice.

Last Spring we asked Wisconsin's Legislators to send us their statement on breast cancer policy in Wisconsin so that we could display them at our 10 Year Anniversary Gala. The statements we received were a big hit at the event, as we posed them in large format in the reception hall. They allowed our members to see where many of our legislators stood on issues that are important to us. Though we don't support any one candidate or party, we feel it's very important that our members and supporters know where all candidates stand on these issues.

We know that health care is a primary issue in the upcoming elections, so we asked ALL candidates and incumbents at both the state and national level to share their thoughts with the people of Wisconsin on the following questions.

What innovative strategy would you recommend to ensure that adequate funding exists to guarantee quality and innovative breast cancer research?

What solution do you recommend to ensure that all breast cancer patients have access to quality care?

This issue contains reprints of all the letters we received.

From the President

I remember the first time I voted. I was so excited! I went into the voting booth... and voted for candidates I heard my parents talk about.

The second time I voted (it was a non-presidential election year). I had no idea who the candidates were, but knew that I didn't want to vote only based on my parent's ideals...so I voted only for female candidates.

The third opportunity I decided not to vote. I had no idea what the candidates stood for, and at the time...I thought my own vote would have no impact.

Now years later, I'm slightly older, much wiser...and breast cancer savvy. I am a new woman. I am informed and I vote. I have seen the impact one person can make! In both Washington, DC and in Madison, when I walk through the door of our elected official's offices, I represent a significantly larger percentage of the population than just myself. My voice becomes thousands of voices. The influence both you and I can have is incredible. Your vote and your voice count!!

If you would like further proof that together we can make a difference, read about WBCC's recent accomplishments on our website at: www.standupandspeakout.org.

Karen Maynard

Tommy Thompson

Secretary of Health and Human Services

Thank you for your kind letter and congratulations on ten years of advocacy for all those people affected by breast cancer.

As you know, I am particularly sensitive to the needs of those afflicted by this terrible disease. My mother-in-law had breast cancer, my wife Sue Ann is a breast cancer survivor, and my youngest daughter Tommi was recently diagnosed with breast cancer. Let me assure you that finding better treatments and a cure for breast cancer is a personal mission for me.

Please know that I will be thinking of you. Best wishes for a successful celebration of ten great years.

Herb Kohl

U.S. Senator

This year alone, more than 258,000 women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and more than 40,000 women will die from this disease. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death for women in the U.S and is the leading cause of cancer death for U.S. women between the ages of 20 and 59.

Yet despite these statistics, we still do not know what causes breast cancer, how to prevent it, or how to treat it most effectively. That is why I have worked in Congress to invest valuable resources into finding a cure. One initiative with a great deal of promise is the Department of Defense (DoD) Peer-Reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program. The groundbreaking research performed through the program has the potential to fight not just breast cancer, but all cancers and other diseases. Its success is literally changing the face of biomedical research, and I've supported funding the program at \$150 million in the next fiscal year.

I've also cosponsored the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act. This legislation directs the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to make grants to public or nonprofit private entities for the development and operation of up to eight research facilities across the country. These centers will conduct critical research on factors that may be related to the causes of breast cancer, and hopefully give us insight into how this disease works.

The financial and technological abilities of the government can make critical contributions to our mission to end breast cancer. As your Senator, I will continue to work to utilize public resources to eradicate this disease and bring health and hope to hundreds of thousands of women across the country. And I am proud to join with groups like the Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition to achieve this important goal. Together, we will succeed.

Russ Feingold

U.S. Senator

I am pleased to congratulate everyone at the Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition as you celebrate 10 years of advocacy. I applaud the work of the WBCC, and I have been proud to fight alongside you to ensure adequate funding for Breast cancer research and access to care for women battling this disease.

I support increased funding for the Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program, which, in its twelve year existence, has strongly contributed to innovative research into a cure for breast cancer. It is imperative that this program receive adequate funding so that it can continue work on preventing, curing, and treating breast cancer.

I am also pleased to have been an original cosponsor of the legislation that created the Breast Cancer stamp, which contributes 30 percent of funding towards the BCRP and has raised over \$35 million for breast cancer research since 1998. In October 2003, I signed onto a letter urging reauthorization of the Breast Cancer Research Stamp program for two more years. This extension was later signed into law.

Finally, I believe that we should have a universal health care system that guarantees access to health care for all. Access to care is vital not only to the treatment of breast cancer, but to making sure that women have access to the screening and prevention needed in order to detect this disease early on when it is most treatable.

Again, I thank everyone at WBCC for your outstanding work in the fight to end breast cancer. Congratulations as you celebrate your 10th anniversary.

Louis J. Molepske, Jr.State Representative
71st Assembly District

The key to breast cancer survival depends on education, early detection and access to quality medical care. The Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition understands this, and is leading the fight to educate our federal, state and local governments to save the lives of so many women.

Every person is affected by breast cancer somehow, and we must protect resources like the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program and Wisconsin's BadgerCare, SeniorCare and Medical Assistance programs to win this fight.

Carol RoesslerState Senator
18th Senate District

Over the years, much has been done to increase breast cancer awareness and accessibility to early treatment. This is heavily attributable to the strength and determination of those who have had the unfortunate experience of fighting breast cancer. Family and friends of these individuals have also played a key role in advocating for awareness, research and treatment. These are the folks I listen to when determining next steps in ensuring access to quality care for breast cancer patients. I look to those who have been there, and know from first hand experience, to educate me on where improvement is needed.

Their voices have led me to support significant legislation over the years related to cancer.

In 1989 I supported Assembly Bill 116, now 1989 Wisconsin Act 129. This Act provides that every disability insurance policy that provides coverage for a woman age 50 or older shall provide coverage for that woman to have an annual examination by low-dose mammography to screen for the presence of breast cancer.

In 2001, I supported a 2001-03 budget provision which provides MA benefits to a woman who requires treatment for breast or cervical cancer but has not applied for MA. This is called presumptive eligibility. A woman in this situation would receive immediate treatment covered by MA and would then have roughly a month after finding out she needs services to apply for MA services.

I co-sponsored a bill, now 2003 WI. Act 175, which creates the Cancer Drug Repository Program. This Program provides an alternative to throwing away costly medication and supplies when other cancer patients no longer need them. Unused, unopened, individually packaged prescription drugs will be accepted from individuals and redistribute them to uninsured and low-income cancer patients.

I look to your leadership for advice and council of breast cancer issues in the future.

Cathy SteppState Senator
21st Senate District

I would like to thank the Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition for ten years of creating awareness about this deadly disease. As women, we must continue to spread the word to our mothers, sisters and friends about the importance of regular self-exams and mammograms.

Those fighting cancer and their families enjoyed several victories this session. "Nick's Law," which I authored, creates a cancer drug repository program where unused, unopened cancer drugs may be donated. Before Nick's Law, cancer patients and their families could not donate their drugs when they were no longer needed. Life-saving drugs were being thrown away because of a glitch in the law. Once Nick's Law is in effect, these very same drugs will now be able to help someone else beat cancer.

In February 2004, both houses of the legislature passed a bipartisan bill restructuring the state's medical assistance debt. The MA budget is important because it funds a variety of health care programs for the elderly, disabled and needy, including the Wisconsin Well Woman Program. WWWP provides a variety of preventative health services, including breast cancer screenings, to women with little or no insurance. In addition to several state programs available to help in the fight against breast cancer, the state-funded University of Wisconsin System continues to conduct ground-breaking research on this disease.

Thank you for including me in your celebration. Congratulations to the Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition on its Ten Year Anniversary.

Sheldon A. Wasserman, M.D.

State Representative
22nd Assembly District

Getting actively involved at all levels of government is the best and most effective way to achieve the goals of securing adequate research funding and health care coverage for breast cancer patients. Every day, by their words and by their actions, politicians make decisions and set priorities that affect people's lives. Every budget year they have direct control over the allocation of billions of dollars at the federal level and millions of dollars at the state level.

In politics people can either be observers or participants in the process. With so many organizations and groups competing for funding, breast cancer activists cannot afford to sit back and allow money to be wasted on misguided priorities. The good news is that you do not have to be a high-powered lobbyist to develop personal relationships with policy makers.

Another effective way of gaining access is by volunteering your time and talents during election season. Even the smallest effort will be recognized and you will be remembered when you call or write your elected officials. Grass roots action, knowledge and diligence are all keys to being successful in your advocacy efforts. And as long as I am in office, you can count on my strong support in the fight against breast cancer.

Thanks to all of you for your hard work.

Daniel P. Vrakas

State Representative
33rd Assembly District

I appreciate the opportunity to submit my remarks for your newsletter.

I have always been a strong advocate for adequate health care coverage of all. I will continue to work with our Insurance Committees and advocate for adequate health care coverage for breast cancer patients. I have worked closely with the American Cancer Society on issues related to drug coverage for cancer treatment and I have always supported providing the best care possible at the best cost possible.

Cancer research is revealing new information every day and we are getting closer and closer to finding a better cure or vaccination and possible prevention of all types of cancer. I support this research as I, too, want to see cancer eliminated from our society.

Best wishes.

Mark Miller

State Representative
48th Assembly District

How to ensure breast cancer patients get medical services?

Our health care system is so expensive and unwieldy that I believe patients will get adequate care only if the system is changed. Changes around the margins may improve a particular shortcoming, but leave us with the larger problem. I proposed the Wisconsin Universal health Plan to insure that every resident of the state has basic health insurance.

Breast Cancer Research:

Breast cancer research is part of a larger medical research effort on cancer and other diseases. I prefer that medical research be funded with public money in order to keep more of the findings in the public domain where therapies should be more readily available at lower cost as a result.

Bonnie Ladwig

State Representative
63rd Assembly District

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to comment on breast cancer issues.

I was the main author of breast cancer reconstruction legislation after having a mastectomy. As a survivor, I am very aware that breast cancer is a health problem that can strike any woman at any time. It is vital that we continue to focus energy on fighting this disease, whether through medical research or legislation that assists breast cancer victims.

Best of luck.

Tammy Baldwin

U.S. Congresswoman
Wisconsin's 2nd Congressional District

I have always been a strong proponent of changing our current health care system into one that truly does provide health care and coverage for all Americans. The Census Bureau recently reported that there are now 43.6 million people without health care insurance in America. This figure includes 20.2 million uninsured women. Millions more encounter a health care system that is unresponsive or inadequate in meeting their basic medical needs because they are underinsured.

This massive number of uninsured women makes programs like the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP) especially vital to our nation's health. The NBCCEDP helps low-income, uninsured, and underserved women gain access to lifesaving screening programs for early detection of breast and cervical cancers. Since the NBCCEDP was established in 1991, the program has screened almost 1.75 million women, provided more than 7 million screening examinations, and diagnosed approximately 14,446 breast cancers.

There are a number of actions I support and that Congress can take to ensure that breast cancer patients receive quality care and that adequate funding exists for research. First, Congress must reauthorize the NBCCEDP this year. Second, we must continue to fund scientific research to detect, treat, and cure breast cancer and I will continue to advocate for this vital funding. Regrettably, my recent effort to boost NIH funding in the federal budget was rejected along party lines. Ultimately, it is your continuing advocacy and activism that will help us defeat this dreadful disease.

Mark Green

U.S. Congressman
Wisconsin's 8th Congressional District

This year, the Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition celebrates ten years of leadership and advocacy in the fight against breast cancer. There's no question, in ten years the WBCC has made tremendous progress in educating folks about this terrible disease, and in securing greater funds for research and care. As a member of Congress and the Wisconsin State Legislature, it has been my pleasure to work with the WBCC to promote legislation that strengthens our commitment to fighting breast cancer.

Yet, despite our progress, we must remain focused on finishing the job. Thousands of folks still don't realize that they may be at risk - that this disease can affect them or someone they love. Many folks across the country continue to ignore the threat of breast cancer, or fail to seek help because they have little or no insurance. And, millions of Americans forget that they have a powerful voice, and that they share in the responsibility of keeping this issue a priority for their elected representatives.

Breast cancer is a health crisis for our entire society. But, it's up to each and every one of us to find a cure. Together, I know we can succeed.

Ron Kind

U.S. Congressman
Wisconsin's 3rd Congressional District

The Wisconsin Breast Cancer Coalition has been at the forefront on the issue of breast cancer and has achieved great things through its efforts to educate and influence. I am grateful for the opportunity to express my thanks and my views.

It is evident that that the cancer community is in great need of funding for research and that cancer patients need access to quality care. While great strides have been made, there is still work to be done. Therefore, I am pleased to be a cosponsor of the following legislation:

HR1746, the Breast Cancer and Environmental Research Act of 2003, would establish centers to study the environmental links to breast cancer

HR1886, the Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act of 2003, mandates insurance coverage for a minimum hospital stay after mastectomies and lymph node dissections

HR1910, Nondiscrimination of Genetic Information bill, prohibits health plans and insurers from discrimination based on genetic information

As the need for research increases, I have consistently worked with the House Appropriations Committee to increase funding for the National Institute of Health. It is critical that institutions such as NIH receive financial support to move forward in their research.

When struck with cancer, patients and their families should not have to worry about how to pay for life-saving treatment. I have authored HR 4498, the Small Employers Health Benefits Program Act, which would create health insurance opportunities for people who are self-employed or employed by small businesses.

I have always been a strong supporter of federal legislation that works to fight the scourge of all types of cancer. I am hopeful that with additional resources and time, it is possible that a cure will be found for this disease.

Tom Petri
U.S. Congressman
Wisconsin's 6th Congressional District

Strong Support for Research is Necessary

Breast cancer has struck my family in the past, so I know first-hand how devastating this disease can be for patients and their loved ones. We need strong, continuous support for research to beat the second leading cause of cancer deaths for women in the U.S.

One example of doing things right is the Defense Department's peer-reviewed Breast Cancer Research Project which, over the past 10 years has established itself as an innovative and accountable effort. The ground-breaking research performed through BCRP has the potential to benefit not just breast cancer treatment, but also the treatments for all cancers, and other diseases as well.

Over 90% of the BCRP's funds go directly to research grants, awarded only to the best science. The program is able to respond quickly to current scientific advances, and is able to fill gaps by focusing research that is traditionally underfunded.

With the new century, we are in a time of startling scientific progress that seems destined to leap forward at an accelerating rate thanks to our expanding knowledge of computer science, biotechnology and nanotechnology. I am confident that we are swiftly approaching a time when cancer will be a cause for concern, but no longer for fear.

But to reach that point, we must keep breast cancer research funding as a top medical priority.

Norman Aulabaugh
U.S. Congressional Candidate
Wisconsin's 1st Congressional District

I'm Norman Aulabaugh, independent candidate challenging Paul Ryan for the seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. Millions of Americans can't afford health insurance. The cost of insurance for employers is a major reason making American companies uncompetitive in world markets. The cost of insurance for government and schools is a major cause of rising taxes. Breast cancer is a major medical problem in America. We can either piecemeal solutions, or solve our multiple health care problems with one solution. I favor the latter approach.

The United States is the last industrialized country without universal health care. I believe America should lead. I favor an affordable universal health care insurance system partially subsidized by a national sales tax. There are different options. We need a debate to educate all Americans on this issue leading to the selection of a good affordable program covering all Americans. For the sake of Medicare, breast cancer screening for all women, our jobs, and the uninsured, we must act soon.

For more information, I urge you to visit my website: www.normanforcongress.com

Bryan Kennedy
U.S. Congressional Candidate
Wisconsin's 5th Congressional District

For far too long women's health issues have taken a back seat to predominantly male ailments. Research funding into breast and ovarian cancers, Crohn's disease, and other predominantly female illnesses has not been at parity with heart disease, and lung and prostate cancers. Wisconsin's Fifth District needs new representation in the U.S. House-someone who will fight for increased funding for health concerns, who will propose real, substantive changes to the health insurance system, and who will pursue a Medicare prescription drug benefit that assists our elder population.

Many of us complain that the costs of healthcare keep rising at faster than the rate of inflation and faster than household incomes. The problem is a lack of competition among insurers and a lack of choice for consumers.

What we need is a wholesale restructuring of the healthcare system, placing control in the hands of CONSUMERS, not insurance companies and HMOs, and not government.

I am proposing a reform in two phases. First, I support the creation of a universal, CATASTROPHIC program. Catastrophic illnesses produce medical expenses that can run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars and could bankrupt even wealthier families. Universal catastrophic care would help the uninsured to have a safety net in case of truly disastrous emergencies. It would also help to drive down the costs of standard insurance by removing the most expensive elements from the risk pool.

Second, I would like to place the choice of healthcare providers in the hands of consumers, not employers. We have seen that COMPETITION KEEPS PRICES LOW as companies compete for customers. Rarely do consumers have much of a choice regarding their healthcare options. An employer presents them with one or two options, and those options are getting more costly each year. Rather than relying on the workforce of a company as the pool for an insurance company, we should eliminate the group pool and pre-existing conditions clauses. Employees should be given a form of "block grant" subsidy from their employer and be allowed to SELECT THE HEALTHCARE OPTION THAT IS BEST FOR THEM AND THEIR FAMILIES.

This will force healthcare companies to have to compete. They will have to OFFER THE BEST SERVICE and find a way of measuring that level of customer service for marketing. We should remove the pre-existing conditions clause and say that a company must insure everyone. If they are truly competing for the lowest risk consumers, they will be able to afford the higher risk individuals in their plans, as well. Even with some higher risk individuals in their pool, costs will be driven down through competition coupled with a universal catastrophic care system.

Shirley Krug
State Representative
12th Assembly District

The impact of cancer on families is something I know firsthand; my Mother was a long-time cancer survivor who ultimately succumbed to the disease, and my eldest brother died of cancer, too young.

During my time in the legislature, I have worked hard on efforts to Advance the early detection and effective treatment of and recovery from Breast cancer. I've voted in favor of legislation that would create a breast cancer research program that taxpayers could choose to donate to through a check-off on their tax forms. The proceeds from this program will be split between the Medical College of Wisconsin and the University of Wisconsin Comprehensive Cancer Center.

I also voted in favor of creating a cancer drug repository program to improve access to cancer-fighting drugs. Because screening and early detection are so important to the fight against breast cancer, I was an advocate for changes in the law that expanded Medical Assistance eligibility for women being treated for pre-cancerous conditions, not just those who are being treated for breast cancer alone.

I also supported restructuring the state's debt in order to free up funds to be used for the Medical Assistance program, which was facing a fiscal crisis if nothing was done. It's through efforts like these that we will ensure that our state remains committed to investing the resources to fight against each and every single case of breast cancer through early screening and readily-available, quality treatment.

Lena C. Taylor
State Representative
18th Assembly District

In order to adequately fund quality and innovative breast cancer research, a variety of means should be employed. I was strongly in support of Assembly Bill 351, which creates an individual income tax check off for breast cancer research. Having been signed into law, this check off box is expected to generate \$590,000 for breast cancer research in its first year alone. I believe we can pursue more legislation like this in order to ensure quality and innovative breast cancer research.

The fight to get everyone in Wisconsin equal access to treatment for breast cancer is a pressing matter. Awareness and early detection are our best weapons in the ongoing fight against breast cancer. Consequently, I think one of the most important things we can do is to make sure that all women have access to trained personnel who can administer low cost health screenings and mammograms at a free clinic. Moreover, we have to spread the message to lower-income women that these free screenings are available. We must also remember that breast cancer detection is not enough. After detection, affordable follow-up treatment is vital to saving the lives of women stricken with this killer. The Wisconsin Well Woman Program (which already provides free screening) must be expanded so that it also provides low cost treatment to uninsured or underinsured women.