

Spring 2018

## PA Breast Cancer Coalition Awards \$200,000 to Researchers in 2018



David Cormode, PhD  
Penn Medicine



Steffi Oesterreich, PhD  
Magee-Womens Research Institute



Sean Knecht, PhD  
Penn State University



Wendie Berg, PhD, MD, FACR  
Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC


*Finding a cure now...*

*so our daughters won't have to.*

Penn State University's Dr. Sean Knecht accepts a 2018 PBCC Research Grant with his 8-month-old daughter Luella.



**T**he PA Breast Cancer Coalition celebrates its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary by supporting the best and brightest minds in breast cancer research working right here in our state. In 2018, the PBCC awards four outstanding scientists working to find the cause of and cure for breast cancer with \$200,000 in research grants. Without funding for their projects, our scientists cannot move forward. Our PBCC's peer review panel composed of outstanding researchers and survivors, has chosen to fund studies at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania and Penn State University.

**Want to bring us closer to a cure?** Donate your state income tax refund to the PBCC on Line 32 and every penny will support Pennsylvania breast cancer researchers! Host a Grassroots Partner event for the PBCC in your community! Make a gift online. **Save lives.** 

**\$3.7 million** **RESEARCH GRANTS TOTAL:**



# PRESIDENT'S CORNER

## FREE Bras for Survivors: *A guide from the PA Breast Cancer Coalition*

by Pat Halpin-Murphy, President and Founder

**S**urvivors: you and I both know how important a good-fitting bra can be, but did you know you could be eligible to get bras for **free**? Yes, **FREE**. You need and deserve to have the most comfortable, custom post-surgery bras available.

Breast cancer survivors who have had a lumpectomy or mastectomy are eligible for free bras each year.\* Our goal is to make sure *every single breast cancer survivor* in Pennsylvania is aware of this benefit. Free bras are available for women insured through Medicare, Medicaid and most private health insurance providers.

*\*survivors must have a breast form or balancer to qualify*



### ► MEDICARE

Survivors insured through Medicare are eligible to receive 3 free bras per quarter / 12 per year. Medicare will cover up to \$35.30 for each bra and, if the bra is more expensive, the survivor pays the remaining balance. (as of March 2018, rate subject to change)

### ► MEDICAID

Medicaid covers free bras for breast cancer survivors by providing two managed care bras each year.

### ► PRIVATE INSURANCE

Most private insurers also offer the bra benefit, but the coverage varies widely. Contact your insurer for details. Research your insurance coverage process and get a prescription or referral from your doctor for the bras. Many shops will take care of these steps for you once you make an appointment!



# 1

FIND A STORE

Find a store or specialty boutique that offers breast forms and bras for survivors. There are many locations in PA with certified fitters where you can find the right bra for you as well as a breast form or balancer.

Find stores at:  
[pbcc.me/freebras](http://pbcc.me/freebras)



# 2

MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

Most providers prefer to reserve an hour of time with each survivor to provide a custom fitting and to help with handling insurance paperwork.

**Be sure to bring your:**

- Insurance /Medicare card
- Prescription/referral
- Valid driver's license



# 3

TELL YOUR FRIENDS!

Share it on social media! Make sure every insured woman who has faced this diagnosis knows she is eligible for free bras. Feel free to also share about your experience with the PBCC!

Email us today:  
[Info@PABreastCancer.org](mailto:Info@PABreastCancer.org)



## SURVIVOR SPOTLIGHT

# MEET..... *Cathy Kehler* .....Cumberland County

### How was your breast cancer found?

**CATHY:** My breast cancer story begins with my father. My dad was diagnosed with breast cancer in December 2014. He had a mastectomy of the right breast and chemo, with the long-term plan for continued tamoxifen. He's had some challenges but is doing fairly well now.

Since it's rare for a man, his surgeon, Dr. Lisa Torp at UPMC Pinnacle, suggested genetic testing. The results showed that he carried the BRCA2 gene mutation. Dr. Torp recommended that the children be tested. My sisters' tests came back negative but mine was positive. That opened up a whole journey of information gathering and decision making. The risk factors include thyroid, ovarian, and breast cancer. Since I had already been treated for thyroid in 1998, it was decided that I'd have my ovaries removed. Then as part of the protocol I had a mammogram and in March 2015 I was diagnosed with breast cancer.

I was fortunate to have the radiologist that I did, and grateful to the PA Breast Cancer Coalition for accomplishing insurance coverage for 3D mammograms. The regular mammogram I had the year before did not detect the cancer, and it's possible that if that one had been a 3D mammogram, I'd have been diagnosed earlier.

### Did you have support through this journey?

**CATHY:** Oh my goodness! The list of help received from family and friends is almost endless. I had complications with my surgery and wasn't able to do much myself. They helped with everything from meals to pharmacy errands and household chores. I even needed help with bathing and dressing wounds.

### How did you first come in contact with the PBCC?

**CATHY:** The nurse navigator at UPMC Pinnacle gave me an information packet and some brochures about the PBCC were included. I got one of the Friends Like Me Care Packages and it had great information. I was able to access the BCCPT treatment program, which was a godsend. I don't know what I would have done without it.




Cathy celebrates survivorship at the PBCC Pink Party with best friend and caregiver Christle Rushoe

“ You hear someone across the table from you say 'I was diagnosed **20 years ago,**' and you think '20 years ago?' **That gives you** *hope.* ”

### How did the PBCC Conference affect you?

**CATHY:** You hear someone across the table from you say “I was diagnosed 20 years ago,” and you think “20 years ago?” That gives you hope. The evidence is right there in front of you that all things are possible. I've attended workshops on nutrition, lymphedema, and reconstruction. At the time of my surgery I hadn't considered reconstruction because it would have been one more surgery and more time off from work. But since then I've thought it sure would be nice to have natural shaping. At the conference I heard a surgeon from Johns Hopkins speak and she said some women have it five or ten years later. That made me think about reconstruction and I have an appointment coming up to plan for this.

### Is there anything you'd like women to know?

**CATHY:** It's important to be able to see the blessings in whatever comes your way. Sometimes what comes is difficult or painful but with all the goodness others shared with me, there was much more good than bad. One hard lesson is accepting help. I learned that in the sharing and caring the giver and the receiver are equally blessed. If there is someone who wants to help you, you may never know what a blessing it brings to them, so allow that to come to them by saying yes to their help. Accepting help is not a weakness. It's a different kind of strength you've not experienced before. 





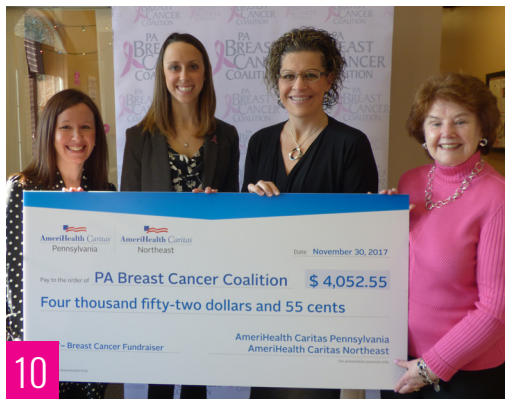
- 1. Westmoreland Walks - \$50,000 | 2. Dance for Life - \$10,500 | 3. First Citizens Community Bank - \$4,200**  
**4. Tanger Outlets - \$3,590 | 5. Martin's Chips in for a Cure - \$10,763 | 6. Spang Crest Luthercare - \$250**



- 7. Littleton Eagles Ladies Auxiliary - \$1,500**  
**8. Rutter's - \$2,500**  
**9. Lancaster Police K9 Unit - \$563**







**10. Amerihealth Caritas Pink Week - \$4,053**  
**11. Breaststroke 4 Breast Cancer - \$14,362**  
**12. Jazzing up the Capitol - \$7,777**  
 (featuring Swing Shift & PA Sen. Bob Mensch on the sax!)

more photos @  
**Facebook.com/PABreastCancer**



**13. Budmen for Boobies - \$24,332**  
**14. Simply J Boutique- \$350**

*Want to make a difference in the lives of breast cancer survivors, their families and researchers in Pennsylvania?*

*Host an event in **your** community!  
 Visit **pbcc.me/hostevent** to get started*





## Breast Density: What Does it Mean? Why Does it Matter?

**Alison L. Chetlen, D.O.**

Associate Professor Department of Radiology  
Penn State Health, Milton S. Hershey Medical Center



**What is breast density?** Breast density is a term used to describe the amount of fibrous and glandular breast tissue compared to the amount of fatty tissue that appears on a woman's mammogram. This fibrous and glandular breast tissue is common and normal and appears white on a mammogram. Fatty tissue appears gray on a mammogram. Having dense breast tissue means a woman's breast is composed of more fibrous and glandular tissue versus fat. Breast density is not related to breast size or firmness.

**How common are dense breasts?** About 40 percent of women over the age of 40 have dense breasts. Dense breasts are more common in younger women, and breasts tend to become more replaced by fat after menopause. For example, over 50 percent of women in their 40's have dense breasts and about 25 percent of women in their 70's have dense breasts.

**What are the categories of breast density?** Breast density categories are used in mammogram reports to indicate the degree of breast density. Radiologists use the Breast Imaging Reporting Data System, or Bi-RADS, to classify breast density into four categories. When a physician says "dense breasts" it can indicate either 'heterogeneously dense' or 'extremely dense breasts', the last two categories.

**How do I know what my breast density is?** The level of information required to be given to a woman regarding her breast density varies from state to state, however Pennsylvania requires

a woman to be notified of her breast density. Breast density will be described both in the patient letter and in the official mammography report sent to the referring provider.

**What do dense breasts look like on a mammogram?** Breasts are a combination of fat and breast tissue. Breast tissue appears 'white' and fat appears gray on a mammogram. Therefore, dense breasts appear nearly all white on a mammogram.

**What is masking?** Cancers are also white on a mammogram! Finding a cancer (which appears white) in a

of developing breast cancer. Masking of cancer by dense tissue results in an increased risk of interval cancers and higher stage cancers for women with dense breast tissue. Even when breast cancer is detected at screening mammography, women with dense breast tissues typically have cancers that are larger, more likely lymph node positive, higher stage, more often multicentric and multifocal, and more often undergo mastectomy.

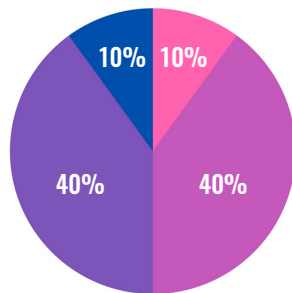
**What determines your breast density?** Some factors which influence your breast density including your genetics and endogenous hormones you cannot change. However, some other factors which contribute to breast density are modifiable including diet, weight, and post-menopausal hormone therapy.

**Is breast density related to my risk for developing breast cancer?** Yes, breast density is one of the strongest predictors of breast cancer risk. A woman with extremely

dense breasts has a 4-6 times increase risk of developing breast cancer as a woman with fatty breasts and two times increase risk of developing breast cancer as a woman with scattered fibroglandular breast density.

**What can I do if I have dense breasts?** In addition to maintaining a healthy weight, exercising regularly, limiting alcohol and eating nutritious foods, a woman could consider preventative medication or supplemental breast cancer screening exams such as whole breast ultrasound or even MRI, if high risk. We recommend speaking with your physician or radiologist to discuss the best plan for you!

### CATEGORIES OF BREAST DENSITY



- Fatty - 10%**  
*Breasts are almost all fatty tissue*
- Scattered - 40%**  
*Scattered areas of dense glandular and fibrous tissue*
- Heterogeneously dense - 40%**  
*Considered to have "dense breasts"*
- Extremely dense - 10%**  
*Considered to have "dense breasts"*

woman with extremely dense breasts (which also appears white on a mammogram) is akin to finding a polar bear in a snowstorm! It is much easier to see a cancer in a fatty breast (which appears gray) on mammography.

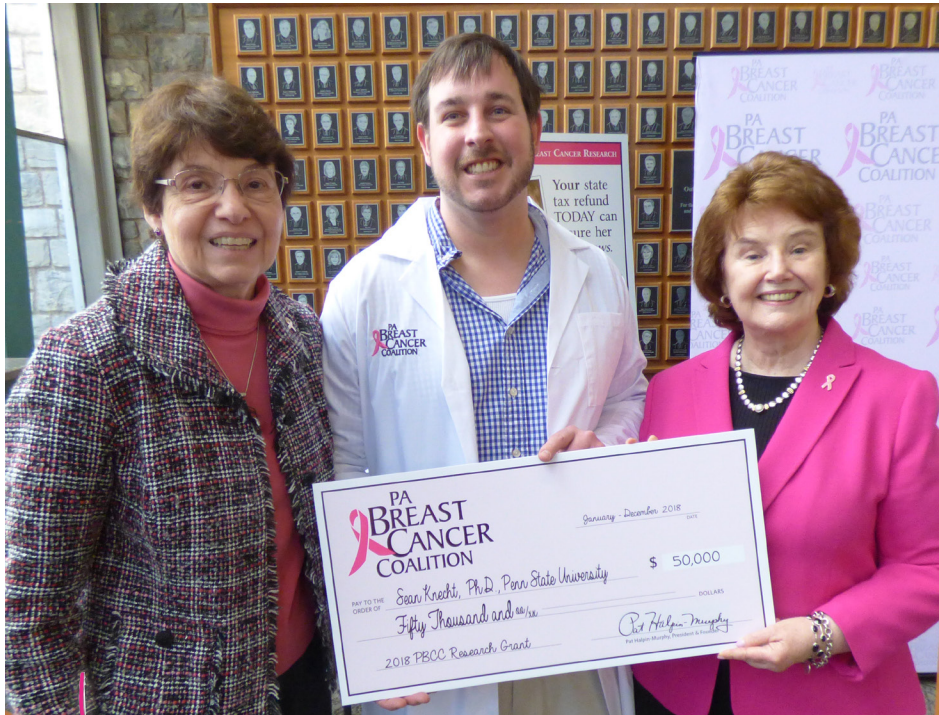
**Dense breast tissue appears as a solid white area on a mammogram; so does cancer!** Note that non-dense breast tissue appears dark and transparent, so visualizing the breast cancer is much easier.

**Why do we care whether breasts are dense or fatty?** Dense breast tissue reduces the effectiveness of mammography and increases the risk

# OUT&ABOUT

with the PA Breast Cancer Coalition

Dr. Knecht collaborated with experts including Dr. Chetlen on his breast cancer screening research grant proposal



The research that PBCC funds *impacts* not just everyone in Pennsylvania, but potentially **everyone** in the world."

- **Sean Knecht, PhD**  
Penn State University  
PBCC Research Grant Winner

PBCC President and Founder **Pat Halpin-Murphy** and Board Member **Dr. Andrea Mastro** award a \$50,000 breast cancer research grant to Penn State University's **Dr. Sean Knecht**. Dr. Knecht's research is focused on a new screening technology using photoacoustics. The screening system would be particularly beneficial to women with dense breasts or women considered at high risk for breast cancer.



Students from Harrisburg and Lebanon School Districts recently experienced hands-on medicine through the **PBCC C.A.R.E.S.** (Community, Advocacy, Research and Education for Students) program. The students had an opportunity to tour Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center's Life Lion helicopter and learned how to start an IV, perform robotic surgery and detect breast lumps in the hospital's state-of-the-art simulation lab. Dr. Nancy Lill, 2017 PBCC Grant Winner, also shared the latest on her breast cancer research with the group.







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800-377-8828  
PABreastCancer.org



Your state tax refund **TODAY**  
can ensure her *tomorrows*.

**Donate your state income tax refund for breast cancer research!**

Write in your donation amount and code "A" for the **PA Breast Cancer Coalition Refunds for Research on line 32** on your state tax form.

**REGISTER  
NOW!**

PA BREAST CANCER COALITION  
**CONFERENCE**

**FRIDAY, OCT. 19, 2018**

— HILTON HARRISBURG —



**MORE INFO >> [pbcc.me/conf](http://pbcc.me/conf)**

**SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!**

