Every woman deserves the best breast cancer screening available. Every woman. For some, a mammogram paints a clear enough picture, but for many women who are considered at high risk for breast cancer and women with dense breasts, they need more. Dense breast tissue makes it harder to see cancer on a mammogram, and many women need extra cost MRI or ultrasound screenings to save their lives.

These women need our help. Maybe you’re even one of them. Will you help us make screening MRI and ultrasound available at no cost to women insured under Pennsylvania law?

PA Sen. Bob Mensch will soon introduce legislation that requires insurers to cover supplemental screenings like MRI and ultrasound for women at high risk for breast cancer, including women with dense breasts.

We’re asking YOU to contact your state senator and ask him/her to co-sponsor Sen. Mensch’s life-saving legislation for breast cancer screening insurance coverage. Do it for the women in your lives and for our future generations.

Take action. Save lives.

Are YOU considered high risk? Are you unable to get an MRI or ultrasound you need because of the high cost? We want to hear from you.
RESEARCH NEWS

PBCC Reaches $1 Million+ Research Milestones to Penn State & The University of Pittsburgh Medical Center

Grassroots Partners, Individual Donors Contribute to Cutting-edge Breast Cancer Research Initiatives

Penn State Cancer Institute Raymond Hohl, MD, PhD, PBCC President and Founder Pat Halpin-Murphy and $50,000 PBCC Research Grant Winner David Waning, PhD celebrate the milestone of over $1 million in research funding to Penn State scientists.

In women with dense breast tissue, about half of invasive cancers go undetected on mammography… some cancers are detected at later stages with worse outcomes. The PBCC provides needed financial support."

- Dr. Wendie Berg, MD, PhD, FACR
PBCC Research Grant Winner

This will have tremendous impact on our ability to treat patients with advanced breast cancer… it will really help drive our discovery."

- David Waning, PhD
PBCC Research Grant Winner

UPMC Hillman Cancer Center Chairman Stanley Marks, MD, PBCC President and Founder Pat Halpin-Murphy, $50,000 PBCC Research Grant Winner Wendie Berg, MD, PhD, FACR and UPMC Hillman Cancer Center Director Robert Ferris, MD, PhD honor the work of Dr. Berg and celebrate over $1 million in research contributions from the PA Breast Cancer Coalition.
Christina Cotsifas, (on the left) smiles for a selfie with friends at the PBCC Pink Party

Tell us about learning you had breast cancer.

CHRISTINA: That was in the late summer 2011. Like a typical woman I’d been taking care of everyone but myself and had just started taking hold of my health. I was exercising and losing weight. Accidentally my arm brushed against my breast and I felt a lump. I was 45 and had never had a mammogram because I was fearful of the pain. At that time, I didn’t think there was cancer of any kind in my family. People don’t always like to talk and I found out there was. I’m more verbal and put it out there all the time. It was stage 2A triple negative.

Who supported you on your journey?

CHRISTINA: My mom and dad especially were the main supporters. Friends took me to chemo. I live in Coatesville and treatments were at Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia. I had a relationship already with my oncologist. I’d been taking my mom to a hematologist because she was highly anemic. I already knew and trusted her. For a while my mom and I scheduled our appointments for the same day. Since then my mom was released from care when the anemia was resolved.

How did you learn about the PBCC Conference?

CHRISTINA: The social worker with the oncologist told me about the PBCC. I’ve been to the PBCC conference twice now. It’s really encouraging. When I was working full time I had benefits, but then I lost my job, got a part-time job and reinvented my career. I didn’t have benefits and wasn’t making good money. I sat in on a workshop on the Affordable Care Act and got great personal help and met the PBCC advocate. It’s been a blessing.

I’ve now become a certified mastectomy fitter. I meet a lot of women and am able to help them and support them emotionally.

How would your life be different if you didn’t have the PA Breast Cancer Coalition?

CHRISTINA: It would be a lot different! I wouldn’t have known that I could sign up for Medicaid. I wouldn’t have had the emotional or financial support that helped me through this journey. I’m grateful for the knowledge.

What do you want other women to learn?

CHRISTINA: Be aware of your body, be an advocate for yourself. Do not let the worry about tomorrow rob you of the joy of today. Try to find something to be happy about. Tomorrow will come and you may not even have that issue you’re worried about.

Every survivor has a story.
Visit pbcc.me/shareyourstory and you could be featured in an upcoming PBCC publication!
1. Garrett Shultz Music - $1,240
2. AmeriHealth Caritas Pink Week - $3,844
3. Bloomsburg University Breast Cancer Walk - $10,087
4. Snitz Creek Brewery - $300
5. Wolf’s Superior Sandwiches - $350
6. Field of Screams - $6,100
Since 2009, Martin's Chips in for a Cure has contributed over $200,000 toward the PBCC’s mission. Thank you, Martin’s!

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7. Penn State Schuylkill Carnival of Hope - $1,055  |  8. Martin’s Chips - $11,077

UPCOMING EVENTS

PBCC Photo Exhibit Opening
Thursday, May 9, 2019
30th Street Station
Philadelphia, PA
pbcc.me/phillyexhibit

Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community
Saturday, May 18, 2019
HACC Harrisburg Campus
Harrisburg, PA
pbcc.me/highmarkwalk

Toasting a Cure at the Vineyard
Saturday, June 8, 2019
Bucks Valley Winery and Vineyard
Newport, PA
pbcc.me/toastingacure

PBCC Photo Exhibit Opening
Thursday, June 6, 2019
Western Pocono Community Library
Brodheadsville, PA
pbcc.me/monroeeexhibit

Host an event in your community! Visit pbcc.me/hostevent and get started!
Why Attend?

The content of each retreat can vary, depending on where it is held and who is conducting it, but one of the most important things about a retreat is the opportunity to spend time and network with others who are in the same situation as yourself.

Spouses want to talk behind closed doors with other spouses. Patients, too, want to talk just with fellow warriors who are dealing with the same disease.

Retreats now available specifically for patients who are dealing with stage IV (metastatic) breast cancer. Johns Hopkins University, where I work, has been offering these retreats for more than a decade.

We hold two retreats every year—one for couples, in which the patients bring their spouse or partner; the other is for women who are not in a relationship, and they bring their female caregiver—usually this person is their sister, daughter, or mom.

These retreats last three days and two nights, and they are free for anyone to attend. We don’t limit our retreats to only patients who are being treated at Johns Hopkins. Half of those who are attending a retreat travel from nearby locations, or even from across the country, to be there. The attendees just need to provide their transportation.

As a result of creating a program planning guide specifically designed to help our other breast cancer centers to replicate these programs, other retreats that are offered by other centers are taking place across the country.

Many lessons are learned during the retreat, some actually from one another. At various points in time, you and other attendees will have some “aha” moments, which are wonderful.

Portions of the program are also specifically designed to enable you and your loved one to escape breast cancer for at least a 2-hour stretch and literally not have it enter your head. (I won’t spoil the surprise of how that is accomplished, though.)

Cutting-Edge Information

At most of these retreats, a researcher or a medical oncologist attends for an hour or so to discuss what is happening in the form of cutting-edge research, what new clinical trials are opening that you may be a candidate for, and how to access them, as well as time to literally get your personal questions answered about your medical situation.

There is dedicated time to discuss what worries you the most, what you are hoping for, what brings you the greatest joy, and how to gain some control over your life at a time when you feel everything is so uncertain.
The PBCC’s C.A.R.E.S. program provides high school students the opportunity to experience a "day in the life" of health care professionals right in their backyard. This year, students from Lebanon and Harrisburg School Districts toured Penn State Milton S. Hershey Medical Center, engaging in hands-on learning to see what it is really like to work in a health care setting.

Real Women. Real Stories.

Don’t miss the kick-off reception for our PA Breast Cancer Coalition traveling photo exhibit, 67 Women, 67 Counties: Facing Breast Cancer in Pennsylvania Thursday, May 9, 2019 at Philadelphia’s 30th Street Station. See the faces of real women from each of Pennsylvania’s counties who have faced breast cancer. This inspirational and educational photo exhibit will be on display through May 19. See you there!

RSVP for the opening reception to Jessica@PABreastCancer.org

So many women believe that life is over once you get breast cancer. Well, my mother and I are living proof that it is NOT. It’s just the beginning!"

- Kerri Conner-Matchett diagnosed at 33
The PA Breast Cancer Coalition is proud to announce its contributions to Penn State researchers have reached a total of $1 million, providing hope for the breast cancer treatments of tomorrow. The PBCC's latest $50,000 grant, awarded to Dr. David Waning of Penn State College of Medicine, will support experiments focused on metastatic breast cancer cells and how they affect bone and muscle mass.

Over the past 20 years, the Coalition has awarded a total of $1,070,000 to Penn State researchers working to find the cause of and cure for breast cancer. Thank you to our Grassroots Partners and individual donors for helping us fund life-saving research right here in PA!

Finding a cure now... so our daughters won’t have to.

PBCC Reaches $1 Million in Research Contributions to Penn State Scientists

This support provides important seed funding to begin critical proof-of-principle experiments.

Penn State Cancer Institute Director Raymond Hohl, MD, PhD, PBCC President and Founder Pat Halpin-Murphy and $50,000 PBCC Research Grant Winner David Waning, PhD

Lace up and fight breast cancer on foot this spring with the PBCC! The Coalition is taking part in the 2019 Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community Saturday, May 18 on the HACC Harrisburg campus.

Our PBCC Captain and survivor Marilyn Fuller-Smith will lead the way as we walk toward a cure for breast cancer. Register now and help us reach our goal of $10,000!

PBCC Captain Marilyn Fuller-Smith

REGISTER NOW >> pbcc.me/highmark

This year’s conference will be held on Friday, October 18 at the Hilton Harrisburg.