

Spring 2020

UNANIMOUS!



PA Senate Passes MRI, Ultrasound Coverage for Women with Dense Breasts, High-Risk Factors

We're halfway there! The Pennsylvania Senate passed Senate Bill 595 **unanimously!** SB 595 requires PA insurers to cover breast MRIs and ultrasounds for women with dense breasts or other high-risk factors. The legislation, as amended, covers supplemental screenings for women at increased risk for breast cancer, including women with extremely dense breasts and women with heterogeneously dense breasts who also have one other high risk factor. High-risk factors include a family history of breast cancer, personal history of breast cancer, prior radiation therapy or a genetic predisposition to the disease. Thank you, Senator Bob Mensch! Thank you, Pennsylvania Senators!

What's next? Senate Bill 595 goes to the PA House Insurance Committee chaired by Rep. Tina Pickett. When reported out of committee, the bill then goes to the full PA House of Representatives for a vote.

Thank YOU for getting this important bill passed in the Senate! Now we must do the same in the House!

TAKE ACTION. Save Lives.

SENATE BILL 595

covers breast MRIs, ultrasounds for women with

1

High-risk factors for breast cancer such as family history, personal history or a genetic predisposition

2

Extremely dense breast tissue

3

Heterogeneously dense breast tissue along with one other high risk factor for breast cancer

PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Rooted in Hope: Grateful for Dedicated Grassroots Partners

by Pat Halpin-Murphy, President and Founder

When I think about the work and impact of the PA Breast Cancer Coalition - the research grants awarded, the care packages sent, the survivors supported and all the lives touched - my mind immediately goes to our Grassroots Partners... and then back to 1993.

The PBCC started as a grassroots effort for change. We needed to support women with breast cancer and

Flip through this issue of Frontline and you will see the impact. Your hard work and dedication allows us to fund \$200,000 in breast cancer research - getting new, innovative ideas off the ground in labs across Pennsylvania. Today, a woman went to her front door and found a Friends Like Me™ care package full of resources and small gifts waiting for her on a day when she needed it most - because of **you**. This October, your contributions will help a woman in the middle of chemo



do everything in our power to find improved treatments and cures. Because of

the efforts of our Grassroots Partners who continue to believe in those goals, we are closer to a cure than ever.

The true strength of our Grassroots Partners lies within your communities. It lies in your walks, your golf tournaments, your high school football games and dress-down days - all in support of our mission to find a cure and advocate for women fighting breast cancer.

“The true strength of the PA Breast Cancer Coalition lies within *your* communities.”

attend our annual Conference in Harrisburg to learn the latest in breast cancer treatment and to meet a whole sisterhood she never knew she had.

Thank you for giving so much of your time, creativity, donations and kindness to our cause. Together, we **will** find a cure for breast cancer now... so our daughters don't have to. 

Legislative Update: Next Steps on Senate Bill 595



Senate Bill 595 passed the Pennsylvania Senate **unanimously!** Now, we **need** the support of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives. Will you fight for insurance coverage for breast MRIs and ultrasounds? Call, email or visit your state House member and tell them why SB 595 will **save women's lives!**

Senate Bill 595: PA Senate  **PA House of Representatives**
Find your PA House representative at pbcc.me/findmylawmaker

MEET

Dr. Susanne Gollin

Allegheny County



Dr. Gollin is a researcher at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center and previous PBCC grant awardee.

How was your breast cancer found?

DR. GOLLIN: Eight years before my diagnosis I was a subject in a cancer genetic study. My mother and my two younger sisters had breast cancer, as well as my maternal great aunt and her daughter, and my father had died of lymphoma. That's why I went into cancer genetics research. I met with a genetics counselor who suggested that my annual mammogram should be diagnostic rather than screening, and that I should have breast MRIs. The third annual MRI saved my life.

In February 2010 I had a mammogram and an MRI. The results of the mammogram were negative but my primary care doctor wanted me to have a biopsy. The doctor said, "I'm 95% confident that you have a small cancer. I'll biopsy to confirm and then you'll get it removed and go along your way to continue your exciting research." She projected a "we can do this" attitude and it set the tone for the entire process.

What was your treatment?

DR. GOLLIN: I decided on a double mastectomy. I chose silicone implants rather than tissue reconstruction, for a variety of reasons, including that I had a genetic predisposition to blood clots. One clot could ruin the entire tissue reconstruction. The tumor was invasive and I concluded that the MRI saved my life, since the mammogram was negative for cancer. I recovered, went back to work in five weeks, and never looked back. I'm grateful for the genetic counselor who educated me about my family history and strategies for early detection.

What do you hope other women learn from you?

DR. GOLLIN: I hope they will meet with their family at reunions or holidays and talk about any history of cancer. They can draw a family tree showing who had cancer and what kind.

Also, women should try to have a friend with them at their appointments. When your doctor talks with you, the

stress of the situation can lead to forgetfulness, or altered perception.

What was your support system like?

DR. GOLLIN: My sister came from Miami to keep my husband company during my five-hour surgery, and to keep me company over the next few days. My husband was a remarkable caregiver. It's so much harder on the family members than it is on the patient. They need support too.

Facebook was a powerful source of support. I floated through the process as though I was a cake crumb being carried by a herd of ants. I envisioned friends in my neighborhood, my congregation, my support group, and my work support group carrying that crumb and it helped me. My philosophy is whatever works. Be positive.

What advice would you give to friends of a woman who was just diagnosed?

Just be there for her. Send her cookies or a little note saying "I'm thinking of you and wondering if I could bring you a bowl of soup." Send an email saying "I'm on your team."

Without the PA Breast Cancer Coalition _____.

DR. GOLLIN: Without the PBCC, women in PA wouldn't have a strong voice for early detection and diagnosis, someone who holds their hands through the process.

My life-saving MRI was covered, but for many women in Pennsylvania, it's not. I am grateful to the PBCC for fighting to pass Senate Bill 595 for breast MRI and ultrasound coverage to help women whose insurers do not cover them. 

 **The MRI**
saved my life,
since the mammogram
was negative for cancer.
I recovered... and
never looked back.

GRASSROOTS PARTNERS

Dancers fighting cancer: Every year, these incredible women host Dance for Life, an event celebrating the life of their friend Diane. Since it began, they have contributed more than \$114,000 toward our mission to find a cure!



1. Dance for Life - \$13,499

2. Camp Curtin Academy Sports Challenge - \$685 | 3. Cambria Heights Cheerleading - \$3,073



4. Lebanon County Career & Technology Center - \$1,000 | 5. Tanger Outlets - \$9,646
6. CJ's Tire & Automotive - \$3,426 | 7. Edgewood Volunteer Fire Department - \$500



All we can say, **Westmoreland Walks**, is **WOW!** This year's WW total comes to **\$65,000** to support breast cancer researchers and breast cancer survivors!

- 8. Hush Medical Aesthetics - \$6,000** | **9. Breaststroke 4 Breast Cancer / Hershey Aquatic Club - \$17,362**
10. Westmoreland Walks - \$65,000

UPCOMING EVENTS



Bradford County Exhibit Opening
 Thursday, May 7
 Bradford Historical Society
 Towanda, PA

Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community
 Saturday, May 16
 HACC Harrisburg Campus
 Harrisburg, PA

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



The Benefits of MRI in Early Breast Cancer Detection

Ruthane Reginella, MD

Director, Butler Health System Women's Imaging Center

In evaluating women with a new diagnosis of breast cancer, breast MRI can sometimes show that the tumor is larger or more involved than thought on mammography or ultrasound. It can also show other areas in either breast that may need attention before definitive treatments.

Another emerging use of breast MRI is for women with dense breasts. Dense breasts give women an increased risk factor for developing breast cancer. About seventy percent of breast cancers occur in dense breasts, and dense breasts are the number one reason for missed breast cancer in mammography. Studies have shown that MRI can detect an additional 10-15 cancers in 1000 screened women (beyond those detected by mammography alone).

Breast cancer screening is becoming more personalized or individualized. Consult with your primary care provider to determine if mammography alone or if

It has many different uses such as imaging the brain, spine, abdomen, joints, and soft tissues, including breasts. MRI uses a powerful magnetic field, radio waves and computer to produce detailed pictures of the structures within the body.

“Dense breasts are the **number one** reason for missed breast cancer in mammography.”

necessary, supplemental imaging, like MRI will benefit you.

MRI or medical imaging modality has been around since the 1980s.

With breast MRI, both breasts are typically imaged. MRI can provide information in women who are at a high risk for breast cancer (greater than or equal to 20% lifetime risk), or have recent or remote diagnosis of breast cancer. These cases must have intravenous contrast (Gadolinium) as an integral part of the evaluation. Women with silicone implants may also benefit from this supplemental imaging (without intravenous contrast) for the evaluation of the integrity of their implants. 

SCREENING STUDY



MRI **Better** than Mammography Alone in Extremely Dense Breasts

A study published in the New England Journal of Medicine shows MRIs are **better** at detecting breast cancer in women with extremely dense breasts than mammograms alone. Women with MRIs were also less likely to have a cancer detected in between their regular screenings.

Read the **New York Times** article on the study at pbcc.me/MRIstudy.

BREAST MRI

with the PA Breast Cancer Coalition



The PA Breast Cancer Coalition brings to us an **awareness** program, an **opportunity** to know the things they have to offer in the way of comfort and support and information. It's all very *important to families in our communities.*

- **PA Rep. Tina Pickett**
(R- Bradford, Sullivan, Susquehanna)

SAVE THE DATE!

Rep. Tina Pickett hosts a special opening reception of our photo exhibit, *67 Women, 67 Counties: Facing Breast Cancer in Pennsylvania* **Thursday, May 7** at the Bradford County Historical Society. We hope to see you there!

Pictured (left to right): *Heather Vail*, Breast Cancer Survivor and PBCC Exhibit Participant, *Rep. Tina Pickett*, *Matt Carl*, Bradford County Historical Society; *Henry Farley*, Sayre mayor; *Helen Harshbarger*, Bradford County resident; and *Jennifer Pensinger*, PBCC executive director.



Have you chosen a team name? Start thinking because registration is *now open* for the **Highmark Walk for a Healthy Community!** We're taking steps toward a cure for breast cancer **Saturday, May 16** on the **HACC Harrisburg** campus with PBCC Captain and breast cancer survivor **Marilyn Fuller-Smith.**

We had so much fun last year and we can't wait for walk day 2020. You don't want to miss this opportunity to get the whole family involved in a cause that affects every one of us.

Visit pbcc.me/highmarkwalk to register!



Breast Friends Walking (above) take part in last year's event. We hope you'll join us for the 2020 Highmark Walk on **Saturday, May 16!**



2397 Quentin Road, Suite B,
Lebanon, PA 17042
800-377-8828
PABreastCancer.org



Want to fight breast cancer in your community?

On the court. At the office. With your support group.

There are SO many ways to make an impact for Pennsylvania breast cancer survivors and the researchers working to save lives.

Become a Grassroots Partner!



Visit pbcc.me/hostevent



RESEARCH

GRANT WINNERS



Lewis Chodosh, MD, PhD
University of Pennsylvania



Anne Moon, MD, PhD
Geisinger Clinic



Richard Pomerantz, PhD
Temple University



Vera Donnenberg, PhD
University of Pittsburgh
Medical Center

**PROUD TO
CONTRIBUTE**

\$ *over* **4 MILLION** *to* BREAST CANCER RESEARCHERS *in* PA