



Maine Breast Cancer Coalition News & Views

Winter 2007

www.mainebreastcancer.org

1-800-928-2644

Beyond Ribbons to Revolution Advocacy Training Conference

Join hundreds of women and men from across the country and the world as you learn to be an educated and effective grassroots breast cancer advocate at National Breast Cancer Coalition Fund's **15th Annual Advocacy Training Conference**, "Beyond Ribbons to Revolution", April 28 - May 1 at the Hyatt Regency Crystal City in Arlington, Virginia, just outside of Washington, D.C.

The conference is the nation's premier breast cancer advocacy event. Unlike any conference of its kind, NBCCF's yearly gathering brings together hundreds of participants to hone their advocacy skills and learn about the latest in breast cancer science, research and policy. Hear directly from major leaders, scientists, and advocates. Become an effective activist in the fight to end breast cancer!

This year's conference will feature new and exciting workshops and plenaries that will provide you with the skills and knowledge needed to finally bring an end to breast cancer once and for all.

Presenters include Eunyoung Cho, the Harvard researcher whose study on whether eating red meat increases the chances of getting breast cancer received nationwide attention, and Dr. Susan Love, nationally recognized breast cancer authority, activist, and author.

To register or find out more visit
www.stopbreastcancer.org or call
toll-free 1-866-640-0969.

Need-based scholarships are available.

Support Service Fund 2006 Report

The Maine Breast Cancer Coalition **Support Service Fund** provides financial assistance for breast health or breast cancer related services and items to underserved people in Maine. The Fund assists low-income, uninsured, or underinsured people who don't qualify for, or whose particular needs aren't covered by other assistance programs. Since the Fund began in 2000, we have awarded grants to more than 750 Maine residents who had nowhere else to turn for assistance.

The following are statistics for our 2006 grant program:

- Number of people receiving grants: 135
- Counties represented: all Maine counties
- Total amount awarded: \$59,382
- Grant range: \$60 to \$900
- Age range of applicants: 28 to 84

Representative items and services funded in 2006:

- breast imaging (mammography and ultrasound)
- chemotherapy
- radiation treatments
- lab/pathology
- radiologist readings
- surgery
- biopsies
- surgeon/physician fees or copays
- lymphedema compression garments
- prescriptions
- travel expenses to treatments
- wigs/ turbans
- prostheses
- many other support services

To find out more about the Support Service Fund or to apply for a grant call Maine Breast Cancer Coalition toll free at 1-800-928-2644 or download an easy-to-complete application from our web site at www.mainebreastcancer.org

The 2006 Support Service Fund was supported by generous contributors including the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation: Maine Affiliate, the Maine Cancer Foundation, the Borman Family Foundation, the York Hospital Breast Cancer Survivors' Group, the Greater Bangor Women's Ski/Snowboard Club, the Fraternal Order of Eagles Pink Sock Foundation, the Barbara Vittum Wine-tasting Events, dedicated fundraisers by organizations and businesses, individual contributions by members and supporters of MBCC, and the countless hours donated to administration of the fund by the all-volunteer Support Service Fund Committee.

Intraductal Research: Promising Research for True Breast Cancer Prevention

(Adapted with permission from the
Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation website)

Imagine a day when a woman will be able to extract a drop of fluid from her nipple and test it at home. A positive test would encourage her to go to her doctor, where the abnormal duct could be identified and treated. This would truly be a "Breast Pap Smear"—and it would mean the end of breast cancer as we know it today.

The Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation is pursuing and funding the intraductal research that will make this dream a reality. The Foundation believes that the intraductal approach is the platform technology that will vault us to a new level of success in preventing breast cancer.

Why the intraductal approach? The word intraductal means "within the ducts". The ducts are the passages inside the breast that the milk travels through to get to the nipple. The lobules are the parts of the breast capable of making milk. Virtually all breast cancer begins inside the milk ducts. Using two new technologies, a catheter and a scope, researchers can see and assess what is happening inside the ducts, and to learn more about the anatomy of the breast and how the normal breast operates—which we still, amazingly, do not know.

This ability to gain insight into normal breast functioning will allow researchers to better understand how breast cancer begins. With this knowledge in hand, they can study how to reverse early cancerous changes. In addition, the intraductal approach provides researchers with access to the fluid that is contained inside the ducts. Studying this fluid may finally lead to the development of a blood or fluid test that would go beyond identifying cancers that are already present to identifying cells that are "thinking" about becoming cancer some day. This would be true breast cancer prevention—and it would mark the beginning of the end of this disease.

Dr. Susan Love is an internationally recognized breast cancer authority, surgeon, researcher, and activist. She is also the author of Dr. Susan Love's Breast Book, now in its fourth edition and widely acclaimed as the "Bible for women with breast cancer." (See page one of this newsletter for information about the NBCCF Advocacy Training Conference, at which Dr. Susan Love will be a speaker.)

To find out more about the Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation, intraductal research, or other current information about breast cancer go to www.dslrf.org

Maine Breast Cancer Coalition's Mission

Maine Breast Cancer Coalition is dedicated to making a difference in the health of Maine people through:

Financial Support for underserved people with breast cancer or breast health needs

Advocacy for breast cancer research and legislation

Education to promote knowledge about breast cancer and quality care

MBCC Wins "Lymphedema Patient Advocacy Award"

On October 21, 2006 the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition was honored at the **Maine Lymphedema Network's** third annual awards and recognition dinner. Our Support Service Fund was the recipient of the "Lymphedema Patient Advocacy Award" in honor of the Fund's record of assisting lymphedema patients in need. In the time span from 2003 until the end of 2006, the Support Service Fund awarded a total of \$6,713 to twenty applicants for lymphedema treatment services and compression garments. Many of the recipients had insurance policies that did not cover their needs.

The following is adapted from the Maine Lymphedema Network's website: Lymphedema is an abnormal, debilitating swelling of a limb or body part due to insufficient drainage of the lymphatic system. Commonly, lymphedema involves the arm or hand in women treated for breast cancer and often extends into their back and breast. This occurs from a collection of lymphatic fluid caused by a disruption to the lymph drainage system after surgery involving mastectomies, lumpectomies, axillary (underarm) node dissection, or after radiation therapy.

Patients who have had a disruption of their lymph-flow from disease process or surgery are at risk for developing this condition. If left untreated, the accumulation of fluid interferes with the function of the extremity affected. This condition usually becomes progressively worse, profoundly affecting the quality of life for patients.

There is no known cure for lymphedema, but patients can receive treatment including manual lymphatic drainage and custom-made compression garments to help improve their functioning and quality of life.

For more information about lymphedema, visit the Maine Lymphedema Network website at www.mainelymphnet.org or call 1-866-326-8855.

Many Newly Diagnosed Breast Cancer Patients Have Unrecognized and Underrated Psychological Needs

(source: American Cancer Society press release, November 13, 2006)

Almost half of newly diagnosed breast cancer patients are found to have clinically significant emotional distress or symptoms of psychiatric disorders before treatment is begun, according to a new study published in the December 15, 2006 issue of *CANCER*, a peer-reviewed journal of the American Cancer Society. The study reveals that while virtually all of the women admitted to experiencing some level of emotional distress, 47 percent met clinically significant screening criteria for emotional distress or a psychiatric disorder, including major depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Studies have shown that significant emotional distress, including mood disorders and related functional impairments, afflict up to one-third of breast cancer survivors for up to 20 years after treatment. However, little was previously known about the baseline psychological status of newly diagnosed breast cancer patients.

To help characterize pre-treatment psychological status, Norris Cotton Cancer Center's Mark T. Hegel, Ph.D. of the Department of Psychiatry at Dartmouth Medical School and colleagues conducted psychiatric and functional screening of 236 women newly diagnosed with breast cancer.

Their findings indicate that almost one in two women met clinically significant criteria for emotional distress or a psychiatric disorder. The most common problem was moderate to severe emotional distress (41 percent). The most commonly reported source of distress was related to the cancer diagnosis (100 percent), followed by uncertainty about treatment (96 percent) and concern about physical problems (81 percent). Twenty-one percent of women met criteria for psychiatric disorders, including major depression (11 percent) and PTSD (10 percent). These women also demonstrated significant declines in daily functioning that were due to the emotional disorders. Treatment for their cancer had not yet begun.

Almost two-thirds of the women with depression had moderate to severe levels of depression, for which treatment is strongly recommended. More than half of the women with depression were already taking psychotropic medication but continued to have significant symptoms, suggesting that even when identified as being depressed they may be under treated.

According to Hegel, an important implication of the study is that "we need to assess for and provide adequate intervention for the women meeting criteria for these severe but very treatable psychiatric conditions." The investigators recommend that "future research should continue to develop and evaluate methods for detecting significant emotional distress and psychiatric disorders in cancer populations and test innovative interventions for effectively treating and managing these disorders in the oncology setting."

To access this and other cancer-related press releases, go to the American Cancer Society website at www.cancer.org. Click on "Press Room", then "Press Releases".

Join Us!

If you are reading this newsletter and are not yet a member of the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition, please consider joining us. Membership is only \$15 for individuals or \$100 for business, organization, or corporate memberships. Please send us the membership form on page four of this newsletter (or a photocopy). Or consider becoming an active member. We meet the second Wednesday of every other month from 5:45 to 7:30 P.M. at MaineGeneral Hospital in Waterville. Call 1-800-928-2644 first to confirm meeting dates.

Special No-Cost Screening Days Offered In York County

Southern Maine Medical Center is hosting three special Screening Days, one at SMMC's Women's Center, and two at the Saco Diagnostic and Therapy Center.

At each Screening Day women will be provided with a clinical exam by a nurse practitioner, pap test, and mammogram, all on the same day.

All screening tests and medical exams will be provided at **no cost** to women who:

- Are between the ages of 30 and 64. (Women in their 30's must be at high risk for breast cancer to be eligible.)

- Have no insurance, or have insurance with a high deductible, or which does not cover the cost of the tests.

- Meet certain income guidelines.

Dates and locations:

SACO & BUXTON - Thursday, March 22, 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
Saco Diagnostic and Therapy Center,
13 Industrial Park Drive, Saco
Leavitt's Mill Health Center,
1013 Narragansett Trail, Buxton

BIDDEFORD - Saturday, March 31,
8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon,
SMMC Women's Center,
One Medical Center Drive

SACO - Wednesday, May 23,
1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.,
Saco Diagnostic and Therapy Center,
13 Industrial Park Drive

Pre-Registration is required. Please call 985-1028 for more information and to schedule an appointment.

Screening services are funded by the Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program, a collaborative effort of the Department of Health and Human Services, Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Chronic Disease and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

We would like to express our appreciation to the following people, organizations, or businesses who recently held fundraising events for the Support Service Fund:

Susan Gallo and members of the **Cumberland/North Yarmouth Family Network** held a cookbook fundraiser dedicated to the Support Service Fund. They sold every cookbook and raised \$2,272 for the Fund.

The **Greater Bangor Women's Ski/Snowboard Club**, long-time contributors to the Fund, raised \$3,679.

Another group that raises money for the Fund every year, the **York Hospital Breast Cancer Survivors' Group**, donated \$4,400 in proceeds from their annual "Walk For Hope."

Maine Coffee Roasters in Portland held a fundraising event and raised over \$1,139.

At the annual **Cure Breast Cancer for ME** event held by the **Maine Cancer Foundation**, \$3,400 was raised in \$50 donations from attendees.

Brewer and Hampden Curves For Women raised \$120 and \$80 at recent fundraisers.

The **Lewiston Eagles** held a fundraiser and donated \$250 to the Fund.

The **Thomas College Peer Advisors** donated the \$86 proceeds of a pink ribbon sale they held in October.

We recently received generous individual donations for the Support Service Fund from:

Jennifer Hitchcox in honor of Susan Gallo
Kim Lynch in honor of Eileen Pushor
Agnes St. Pierre in memory of Elaine
Barb Vittum, Kenneth and Eleanor Vittum in memory of Gudrun Andersen
Norway Savings Bank in honor of Francis and Erika Waters

Anne Babbitt
Christine Bennett
Meredith Burgess
Mary Beth DiMarco
Anne Funderbunk
Barbara Livingston
Cathy McDonald
Frances McDonald

Thank you for your generous contributions!

How You Can Help

The **Support Service Fund** is only partially supported by grants from major foundations. MBCC also relies on contributions from local groups or individuals. If your community group, business, or organization would like to dedicate all or part of the proceeds from a fundraising effort to the Support Service Fund, contact grants chairperson Chris Haiss at 207-938-4018 or czh@tdstelme.net.

Or please consider a tax-deductible donation of any amount. See the donation and membership form below for details. Checks should be made payable to MBCC. Please write "**Support Service Fund**" on the memo line. (Membership fees are not tax-deductible.)

MBCC is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Yes! I want to support the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition's work.

- I want to be active in the *Maine Breast Cancer Coalition*. Please contact me.
- I want to become a member of *MBCC*. Enclosed is a check for \$15 (individual) or \$100 (business or organization membership) payable to *MBCC*.

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone (day) _____ (eve.) _____
Email _____

- I want to make a tax-deductible contribution. Enclosed is a check payable to *MBCC* for \$ _____.
In honor/memory of _____
- I want to donate the following gifts or services:

Please mail your check for membership and/or contribution with this form to:

Maine Breast Cancer Coalition
11 Bangor Mall Blvd. Suite D
PMB 362
Bangor, ME 04401-3650

