



Maine Breast Cancer Coalition News & Views

Fall 2007

www.mainebreastcancer.org

1-800-928-2644

October: Breast Cancer Awareness Month

October, "Breast Cancer Awareness Month," is a time to reflect on the impact of breast cancer nationwide and in Maine. *This year nearly 900 Maine residents, almost all of them women, will be diagnosed with breast cancer and 170 will die of this disease.* Breast cancer patients and those close to them will be affected by the medical, emotional, and financial impact of a breast cancer diagnosis.

Awareness is a first step toward change, but it will take more than awareness to make a difference. Actions, both large and small, by committed individuals and groups will have an impact on breast cancer.

Consider the following ways you can make a difference during this Breast Cancer Awareness Month:

Let our lawmakers know that breast cancer is important. Keep informed of legislation related to breast cancer and urge your lawmakers to support these bills. Go to the **National Breast Cancer Coalition** site www.stopbreastcancer.org for updates on breast cancer legislative priorities and NBCC's "Breast Cancer Caucus" initiative.

You can help discover the causes of breast cancer. If your sister has ever been diagnosed with breast cancer and you have never been diagnosed yourself, consider joining the **Sister Study**, a landmark national research study to find the genetic and environmental causes of breast cancer. Go to www.sisterstudy.org or call 1-877-4SISTER for more information or to enroll.

Consider becoming a member or making a tax-deductible contribution to the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition. Our award-winning, volunteer-administered **Support Service Fund** has provided financial assistance for breast cancer or breast health related services to more than 800 Maine residents since 2000.

Our membership/donation form is on the back page of this newsletter.

More Reservations Needed for Maine Specialty License Plate to Support Breast Cancer Services

Maine LD 775 "An Act to Create a Special License Plate to Support Breast Cancer Services" has been introduced in the Maine State Legislature. It will require 2,000 pre-reservations by December 31, 2007 to allow for production of the plate to begin in October 2008. *So far just over 900 plates have been reserved, but there is still a long way to go!*

The proceeds from this specialty plate will be split equally between three beneficiaries: the **Maine Breast Cancer Coalition** for our *Support Service Fund*; the **Maine Cancer Foundation** for their *Women's Cancer Research Fund*; the **Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program** for their *Mammogram Fund*.

Visit the Maine Cancer Foundation website at www.maineccancer.org for detailed information and a license plate reservation form.

Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program Receives Grant to Assist 35-39 Year-Olds

The Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program (MBCHP) has received an important grant from the Maine Affiliate of Susan G. Komen For the Cure. *This grant will allow MBCHP to serve a limited number of women aged 35-39 who meet the following guidelines:*

- Currently experiencing breast symptoms confirmed by a health care provider, who has recommended further testing; and/or
- Recently had an abnormal Pap test result and the health care provider has recommended further testing; and/or
- Has not had a Pap test in five or more years.

In addition to the medical criteria above, women must meet MBCHP eligibility guidelines:

- A resident of Maine or a New Hampshire resident whose primary residence is located less than 15 miles from the Maine border;
- Financially eligible – income is at or below 250% Federal Poverty Level
- Uninsured or underinsured.

If women in this age group are diagnosed with Breast or Cervical cancer through MBCHP, they may also qualify for the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act through MaineCare.

For more information, contact the Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program at 1-800-350-5180.

Comprehensive Research Review Advances Search for Preventable Causes of Breast Cancer

(Press release from Silent Spring Institute: www.silentspring.org)

If you've ever wondered how much is known about chemical or environmental exposures and the relationship to breast cancer, you're not alone. Individuals who want to make healthy lifestyle choices, policymakers, scientists, activists, and funding organizations all need this information to target breast cancer prevention alongside screening and treatment.

Recognizing the importance of this question, Susan G. Komen for the Cure invited Silent Spring Institute to lead a multi-disciplinary team to determine where there is consensus within the scientific community on the relationship between environmental factors and breast cancer and where additional research or improved research methods are needed.

The results of this effort were published May 14 in a supplement of *Cancer*, a journal of the American Cancer Society. The project also created the largest online database of chemicals shown to cause mammary gland tumors in animal studies. The database references 900 studies, covering human studies of physical activity, body size, diet, and environmental pollutants, as well as interactions of these factors with inherited genes.

The database shows that exposure is widespread for many of the 216 compounds that caused breast tumors in animal tests:

- 73 have been present in consumer products or as contaminants in food,
- 35 are air pollutants,
- 25 have been associated with occupational exposures affecting more than 5,000 women a year, and
- 29 are produced in the U.S. in large amounts, exceeding 1 million pounds per year.

The database is publicly available at <http://www.silentspring.org/sciencereview>

Two examples of environmental exposures for which the researchers found evidence of increased risk of breast cancer include:

- polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs --banned chemicals previously used in electrical equipment and other products) in women genetically susceptible to the effects of these chemicals, and
- polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), ubiquitous air pollutants from vehicle exhaust and combustion.

The analysis also reveals that the overwhelming majority of chemicals people are exposed to have never been tested for cancer risk. Therefore, the research team concludes, expanding and improving chemical testing is essential.

Silent Spring Institute Executive Director Dr. Julia Brody noted, "Because breast cancer is so common and mammary carcinogens are pervasive throughout society, reducing exposures would have a profound effect on public health, sparing thousands of women." She added, "In addition to guiding future research, we hope this information will be considered by regulators for decisions about limiting human exposure and by manufacturers in reformulating products and re-engineering processes to avoid suspect chemicals."

The results of the lifestyle portion of the study underscore the importance of regular, lifelong physical activity to lower a woman's risk of developing breast cancer. Reducing alcohol consumption and avoiding weight gain or being overweight after menopause also lower risk. The study team concluded that further research is needed to determine the relationship between dietary factors and breast cancer.

The second phase of the Institute's study, also funded by Komen for the Cure, will focus on the toxicology of endocrine disruptors, perinatal and early life exposures,

nonhormonal pharmaceuticals, tobacco smoke, occupational exposures, exposure to light at night, and stress and social factors. Partnering with Silent Spring Institute were researchers from Harvard University, Roswell Park Cancer Institute, and the University of Southern California.

"Breast Health: What You Need to Know!" Presentation in Skowhegan

On Monday, October 22 "Breast Health: What You Need to Know!" will be presented by Ro LeGasse', BS, M.Ed, Director of Caring Connections and president of the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition and Robin Long, LPN, BS, Assistant Director of Caring Connections. The program will take place at Redington-Fairview General Hospital, Skowhegan, 6:00-7:30 p.m., RFGH conference room #1.

Topics will be risk reduction, myths, facts, and financial support resources. *Please call 858-2318 to reserve space.*

Maine Breast Cancer Coalition Call For Nominations

Maine Breast Cancer Coalition is seeking nominations in preparation for election of next year's officers, which will take place at our November 14, 2007 meeting.

Any MBCC member who wishes may submit a nomination for the following Maine Breast Cancer Coalition volunteer positions: president, vice-president, treasurer, or secretary.

Nominations must be received before November 14th. For more information or to submit nominations, please call our toll-free number at 1-800-928-2644.

All nominees must be active members of MBCC. Voting will take place at our November 14th meeting and the new officers will begin their tenure in January 2008.

Susan G. Komen For the Cure Maine Affiliate Reaches Million Dollar Milestone

(From press releases by Maine Affiliate of Susan G. Komen For the Cure)

The Maine Affiliate of Susan G. Komen For the Cure is proud to announce that as of April 2007, the Maine Affiliate had reached the one million dollar mark in grants awarded in its ten-year history. In the 2006 fiscal year alone, ten Maine grantees received a total of more than \$261,000. The Maine Breast Cancer Coalition was among these grantees, receiving \$35,000 for our Support Service Fund.

Of the funds raised each year, up to 75% of net funds stay in Maine, and are distributed in the form of grants to breast cancer programs throughout the state that provide education, screening and treatment for the medically underserved. At least 25% of net monies fund national research through the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Award and Research Program.

The 2007 Race For the Cure, which took place on September 16 in Bangor, had more than 3,800 participants and raised more than \$170,000, a record for both registrations and money raised.

The Maine Affiliate office provides access to current educational materials, breast cancer awareness merchandise, and information on upcoming events to people affected by breast cancer, family, friends, and healthcare personnel. To contact the Komen Maine Affiliate office phone 207-262-7117 or go to www.komenmaine.com.

Maine Leadership Awards For Breast Health To Be Presented At Blaine House ***Maine Individuals Honored for Dedication and Commitment***

(Press release from American Cancer Society, September 18, 2007)

The Maine Leadership Awards for Breast Health will be presented at the 10th annual Silver Tea hosted by First Lady Karen Baldacci at the Blaine House in Augusta on Tuesday, October 2 at 2:00 p.m. as part of Breast Cancer Awareness Month. This year the Leadership Awards will be presented to one woman who has made extraordinary contributions as a volunteer, and two individuals with exceptional records as health care professionals. This year's recipients are Cathy McDonald, RN, MS, of Portland; Elaine Chambers, RN, MS, of Hamden; and William Horner, MD, of Bangor—all recognized for their leadership in advocating for the breast cancer needs of Maine women.

Cathy McDonald's role as a volunteer dates back many years. She developed cancer support groups at the Cancer Community Center; participated in Maine and National Breast Cancer Coalition initiatives; and worked for the American Cancer Society as a Reach to Recovery volunteer and coordinator, as a member of the Breast Cancer Speakers Bureau, as a participant at Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walks, and as a Celebration on the Hill ambassador in 2006. In her professional capacity as Clinical Nurse Coordinator at Mercy Hospital's Breast Health Resource Center for the past nine years, McDonald has made a significant impact on hundreds of women who have come through the breast cancer program at the hospital.

"Cathy is always selfless in any volunteer position she has held," said Cheryl Tucker, Community Executive for the American Cancer Society, in a letter to the selection committee. "She is always thinking about what is best for breast cancer survivors."

Elaine Chambers, RN, MS, and William Horner, MD, are co-winners of the 2007 Breast Health Leadership Award for health care professionals. Chambers has worked at Eastern Maine Medical Center (EMMC) in a variety of positions since 1980. Currently the Department Head Nurse at the hospital's Breast and Osteoporosis Center, she has also served there as a liaison for Caring Connections, a cooperative

women's health initiative; coordinator of the Women's Center of Eastern Maine; Nurse Recruiter; Women's Health Educator; and Staff Nurse. In addition Chambers helped found the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition in 1992, and participates in a number of breast health/breast cancer efforts in the community.

In his letter to the selection committee, Paul Templeton, MD, Chief of Radiology at EMMC, stated that Chambers has played significant roles in the development of many different initiatives at the hospital, and "worked diligently and tenaciously towards worthy goals to improve the health of women" in the eastern Maine region."

William Horner, MD, practiced general surgery in Bar Harbor and Portland in the 1970s and 1980s, and then set up an office in Bangor which quickly evolved into a specialty in the management of breast disease. Since 1998 he has served as Medical Director at EMMC's Breast and Osteoporosis Center, where he has fostered its transformation from a mammography facility to the fully comprehensive breast health center that it is today. In addition he has held both state and local leadership positions, including serving as president of the Maine Chapter American College of Surgeons.

Susan O'Connor, MD, wrote in her letter of support to the selection committee, "Dr. Horner considers the work he has done to expedite breast diagnosis and educate [others about] best practices as the gift he leaves to the community."

The Maine Leadership Award for Breast Health, created in 1998, is a collaborative effort of the American Cancer Society, the Maine Breast and Cervical Health Program, the Maine Cancer Foundation, the Maine Breast Cancer Coalition, and Susan G. Komen for the Cure – Maine. Leadership Awards are presented annually during the month of October to recognize Maine residents who have made exceptional contributions to promoting breast health, improving understanding of breast cancer, and/or working toward the elimination of the disease at the national, state, or local level.

MBCC Support Service Fund News

The MBCC **Support Service Fund** provides financial assistance for breast health or breast cancer related services and items to low-income, uninsured, or underinsured people who don't qualify for, or whose particular needs aren't covered by other assistance programs. So far this year we have received applications for financial assistance from 119 Maine residents. We expect to award about \$73,000 in grants to a projected 160 applicants this year. To find out more 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

We recently received donations for the Support Service Fund from:

Sandy Plette

Robert Gillahan

Nancy Dudley

Five anonymous donors contributed through a giving program set up at **Norway Savings Bank**.

Sue Callahan, a Longaberger baskets consultant, **Carlene Sperry**, an American Cancer Society (ACS) volunteer, and **Bonnie Bickford** of ACS, collaborated in an effort to raise funds for our *Support Service Fund* at a series of events in July and August. Sue donated her profits of \$775 raised at these events to the Support Service Fund.

Thank you for your generous contributions!

How You Can Help

The *Support Service Fund* is only partially supported by grants from major foundations. MBCC 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.

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

Our Mission

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

- **Financial support** for underserved people with breast health or breast cancer needs
- **Advocacy** for breast cancer research and legislation
- **Education** to promote knowledge about breast cancer and quality care

Join Us!

If you are receiving this newsletter and are not yet a member of the *Maine Breast Cancer Coalition*, please consider joining us. Annual membership is only \$15 for individuals or \$100 for business, organization, or corporate memberships. Please send us the membership form on this page (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.

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

