

March 23, 2009

The Honorable Debbie Wasserman Schultz
United States House of Representatives
118 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Wasserman Schultz:

The Susan G. Komen for the Cure® Advocacy Alliance supports the “Breast Cancer Education and Awareness Requires Learning Young Act of 2009,” or “EARLY Act,” which will initiate an aggressive public education campaign about breast cancer and women under age 40 — with an emphasis on women at higher risk due to their race, ethnicity or genetic heritage. The bill will also help health care professionals be more aware of the risk factors, the opportunities for genetic counseling and testing, and the unique challenges that face young women diagnosed with breast cancer.

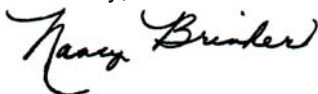
While breast cancer is less common among women under age 40 than for other age groups, this year alone, 11,000 young women under age 40 will be diagnosed with breast cancer. Of these, about 1,000 will be between age 20 and age 30. Today, more than 250,000 women under age 40 are living with breast cancer; many of them found out they had cancer while they were in their 20s. Diagnosing breast cancer in young women can be more difficult because their breast tissue is often more dense than the breast tissue of older women. By the time a lump can be felt in a young woman, it is often large enough and advanced enough to lower her chances of survival. In addition, the cancer may be more aggressive and less responsive to hormone therapies.

We know all too well the importance of educating young women about breast cancer. My sister Suzy, for whom Susan G. Komen for the Cure is named, was diagnosed with her breast cancer when she was just 33 years old. I was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 37. We know so much more now than we did then; yet, so many young women do not understand the risks, and so many providers do not understand that young women can get breast cancer.

Komen has a long history of working with younger women who are affected by breast cancer and provides educational materials and resources for younger women diagnosed with breast cancer. Komen strongly encourages every woman to take charge of her life. First, know your risk — learn your family health history and talk to your provider about your personal risk of breast cancer. Second, get screened — ask your health provider which screening tests are right for you. Third, know what is normal for you — know your body and tell your health provider right away if you notice a change in the way your breasts look or feel. Finally, make healthy lifestyle choices. More information is available on www.Komen.org.

Thank you for introducing this important legislation. We look forward to continuing our work with you to develop lasting public policies that will reduce suffering and death from cancer.

Sincerely,



Nancy G. Brinker
Founding Chair, Susan G. Komen for the Cure
Board of Directors, Susan G. Komen for the Cure Advocacy Alliance

Susan G. Komen for the Cure is the world's largest grassroots network of breast cancer survivors and activists fighting to save lives, empower people, ensure quality care for all and energize science to find the cures. Thanks to events like the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure®, Komen has invested more than \$1.3 billion to fulfill its promise, becoming the largest source of nonprofit funds dedicated to the fight against breast cancer in the world. To continue this progress, Komen for the Cure has pledged to invest another \$2 billion in the next ten years.

The Susan G. Komen for the Cure Advocacy Alliance is the nonpartisan voice for over 2.5 million breast cancer survivors and the people who love them. Our mission is to translate the Komen promise to end breast cancer forever into evidence-based government action to discover and deliver the cures for cancer.