

**U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Energy & Commerce
Subcommittee on Health**

H.R. 995, The Mammogram and MRI Availability Act of 2009,
H.R. 1691, The Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act Of 2009,
H.R. 1740, The Breast Cancer Education and Awareness
Requires Learning Young Act of 2009,
H.R. 2279, The Eliminating Disparities in Breast Cancer Treatment Act of 2009;

Oral Testimony of
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Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ranking Member, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today about the four breast cancer bills before your committee. My name is Jennifer Luray, and I am President of the Susan G. Komen for the Cure® Advocacy Alliance and Vice President of Government Affairs and Public Policy for Susan G. Komen for the Cure®.

It's appropriate that you are holding this hearing today, the first full week of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and I send my thanks to all those Members who have chosen to wear our pink ribbon this month. This year marks the 25th Anniversary of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. It's an opportunity to reflect on what we have accomplished but also be frank about what's left to be done, which is why we are here today.

Before the nation celebrated Breast Cancer Awareness, we practiced denial. We didn't talk about breast cancer, didn't understand it, did little to find out how to prevent and cure it. This was the world that Suzy Komen lived in when she heard those dreaded words – you have breast cancer.

After a three year fight, she lost her battle with the disease, but not before making her sister Nancy promise to do everything in her power so that other families would not have to endure what they did. In 1982, Nancy Brinker founded Susan G. Komen for the Cure. The promise between two sisters has become the promise of millions.

Thanks to public support for events like the Race for the Cure®, we have invested almost \$1.5 billion in cutting-edge research and community programs, and we have pledged to invest another \$2 billion over the next decade. The Komen Advocacy Alliance, the sister organization that I am proud to lead, mobilizes a network of more than 250,000 advocates working at the state and national level to promote important policy change.

Komen for the Cure's promise is to leave few scientific opportunities or community needs untouched. Yet, to make the most of these investments, *first*, we need to empower women to be advocates for their own health, *second*, to expand access to health care and *third* to improve the quality of care that women receive. And we need the help of Congress to do this. I'm pleased to be here today because each of the bills before the committee helps to move us closer to these goals.

The Breast Cancer EARLY Act (H.R. 1740 / S. 994)

Information empowers women to be their own advocates. Yet, too many women don't receive information about breast cancer until their doctor recommends their first mammogram in their 40s. And that's just too late. Each year, 25,000 women in the U.S. under age 45 are diagnosed with breast cancer, and almost 3,000 women under age 45 will die of the disease. That's approximately 10 percent of all breast cancer diagnoses this year – certainly not a trivial number. That's why Komen supports H.R. 1720, the Breast Cancer Early Act by Reps. Wasserman Schultz and Myrick.

A carefully targeted, evidence-based public health effort will inform young women *and* their providers that breast cancer unfortunately *does* occur in young women. It will help women to establish good lifelong breast health habits like regular exercise and to be empowered to seek care when they suspect something is wrong. It will also prevent fewer young women with breast cancer from being overlooked by the medical system and left undiagnosed until their disease is tragically advanced. We have had an *outpouring* of support from young women around the country for this bill.

We are working with the bill's sponsor to ensure that the funding for this outreach does not come from existing funding for the CDC's National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP), which serves low-income women.

Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act of 2009 (H.R. 1691)

To be truly empowered, women also need the ability to impact decisions. That's why the Komen Advocacy Alliance has consistently supported the "Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act" by Reps. Rosa DeLauro (D-CT) and Joe Barton (R-TX). Decisions concerning a women's care after a complicated medical procedure should be made jointly by the patient and her doctor — not by her insurance company.

Mammogram and MRI Availability Act of 2009 (H.R.995)

The second goal I mentioned earlier was expanding access to health care. At Komen, we believe that all women should have access to recommended screenings, including cancer survivors who need follow-up testing and surveillance. That's why we support HR 995, the "Mammogram and MRI Availability Act," introduced by Rep. Nadler (D-NY). The bill is consistent with guidelines recommended by the American Cancer Society and the National Comprehensive Cancer Network that women at high risk receive annual mammograms *and* an MRI every year.

Eliminating Disparities in Breast Cancer Treatment Act of 2009 (H.R.2279)

When we talk about improving access to care, we mean access to *quality care*, our third goal. We commend Congresswoman Castor for her attention to the issue of disparities in breast cancer and the need to ensure that low-income women receive high quality care so they can benefit from the same outcomes as higher income women. Improving the quality of cancer care has been a focus of Komen for some time.

We recently joined with the American Society of Clinical Oncologists to collect data that can be used for quality improvement. This type of data collection is needed for any performance or quality-based payment system.

America's Affordable Health Choices Act (H.R. 3200)

In addition to these bills specific to breast cancer, we want to applaud Congresswoman Capps for her leadership on two comprehensive cancer bills, one to revamp research and the other to improve care. The Komen Advocacy Alliance is also working hard on health care reform and strongly supports the insurance reforms in H.R. 3200 that would prevent patients from being denied coverage due to pre-existing conditions, protect patients from high out-of-pocket costs, and dramatically improve access to mammograms.

Before Congress reconvened in September, we asked our network of 250,000 advocates to vote on their health reform priorities and to share their personal experiences. Nearly 60,000 Komen advocates contacted their representatives. Their heart-wrenching stories call out the need for health care reform: breast cancer patients turned down for insurance, turned destitute after paying for their care and turned sicker because they can't afford screening or treatment.

Conclusion

Thank you, again, for the opportunity to testify before your committee. As we mark the 25th anniversary of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we take a hard look at what we've accomplished and where we need to be. The stigma surrounding breast cancer in our country is largely gone - a fact that makes us the envy of women world over. In the U.S., more women are being screened and living longer as a result. We've made progress on key scientific fronts. Yet, if we are one day to end the suffering and death from breast cancer, we must continue to make investments across the cancer continuum – in prevention research, detection and treatment. And we must always continue to trust women to be our partners in this fight – information empowers women. We look forward to working with you, the other organizations represented on this panel, and our partners in the cancer community as we race forward. Thank you.

