

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

In March, Reps. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), Sue Myrick (R-NC), Donna Christensen (D-VI) and Melissa Bean (D-IL) introduced the Breast Cancer EARLY Act (Education and Awareness Requires Learning Young) in the U.S. House. Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Olympia Snowe (R-ME) introduced a similar bill in the U.S. Senate. The EARLY Act will:

- Initiate an evidence-based public education campaign about breast cancer in women under age 40 — with an emphasis on women at higher risk due to their race, ethnicity or genetic heritage.
- Educate health care professionals about the risk factors, opportunities for genetic counseling and testing, and unique challenges that face young women diagnosed with breast cancer.
- Provide grants to organizations that provide credible health information directed to young women diagnosed with breast cancer.

The EARLY Act authorizes \$9 million per year for FY2010 through FY2014 to carry out the awareness and education campaigns and to provide grants to organizations that provide breast health information to young women.

WHY DO WE NEED THE EARLY ACT?

- While it is rare, young women under age 40 can and do develop breast cancer. In the U.S. about 5 percent of all breast cancer occurs in women under age 40:
 - More than 9,000 women in the U.S. under age 40 are expected to be diagnosed with breast cancer this year, and more than 1,200 will die.
 - There are more than 250,000 women living in the U.S. today who were age 40 or under when they were diagnosed with breast cancer.
 - The five-year relative survival rate in the U.S. is slightly lower among women diagnosed with breast cancer before age 40 (82 percent) compared to women diagnosed at ages 40 and older (89 percent).
- 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.
- There are benefits to starting evidence-based, age-appropriate breast health education early. By starting young, when women are still developing their lifelong habits, educating them about the benefits of healthy living and breast self-awareness will lead to a lifetime of empowerment. And they may be willing to adopt healthy lifestyles including exercise and nutrition.

REQUESTED ACTION:

Support Young Women with Breast Cancer — Cosponsor the EARLY Act (H.R. 1740 / S. 994)

For more information about the Komen Advocacy Alliance or cancer in your state, contact Shelley Fuld Nasso, Director of Public Policy at sfuldnasso@komenadvocacy.org, or visit www.KomenAdvocacy.org.

The Susan G. Komen for the Cure® Advocacy Alliance (KAA) 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 action at all levels of government to discover and deliver the cures.