



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

James S. Alesi

A Letter From Senator Alesi to His Constituents Concerning Breast Cancer Awareness

JAMES S. ALESI October 20, 2011

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Dear Friend,

Few things in life are more devastating than a diagnosis of cancer, especially when it strikes close to home. Hearing the news is both frightening and confusing, yet the outlook for people diagnosed with cancer is better than ever before. Having worked with many breast cancer survivors in their year-round fight against this disease, I am reminded often of the importance of early detection. Being proactive about breast health care has proven successful in saving countless lives.

In recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, I encourage everyone to contact their health care providers to receive regular screenings for breast cancer. Each year, 200,000 women and nearly 2,000 men are diagnosed with breast cancer in the United States. The American Cancer Society recommends that every woman have a baseline mammogram by age 40, and a screening mammography every year thereafter. However, every woman should consult her doctor personally.

According to the American Cancer Society, breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in the United States, other than skin cancer. It is the second leading cause of cancer death in women, after lung cancer. In the United States alone, there are over 2.5 million breast cancer survivors which can be attributed to earlier detection and better treatment. There is no sure way to prevent breast cancer but there are steps that women can take to reduce their risks of getting the disease. Knowing the risk factors for breast cancer enable women to take more control of their health. These risk factors include, but are not limited to: age, personal and family history of breast cancer, reproductive and menstrual history and radiation therapy.

Because of the increased importance of breast cancer awareness, I have supported numerous efforts to help encourage early detection and regular screening. This year, I fought for legislation that was adopted in the Senate (S.1883-A) that would require insurance companies to cover the cost of supplemental screenings for women as a follow-up to a mammogram that reveals dense breast tissue, which is a significant risk factor for breast cancer. This legislation gives doctors the information they need in order to save lives and patients the power to be more informed about their own medical situation. Thorough, effective screening for all women is now a reality in New York.

As is often the case with chronic illness, education is the key to early detection in the fight against cancer. By recognizing the symptoms of breast cancer, even when some may seem mild or inconsequential, women can seek medical attention early, if needed, thereby increasing survival rates. Below are pertinent web sites where you can gather additional reference material.

While Breast Cancer Awareness Month does much to further the cause and save lives, our fight against breast cancer must not be limited to one month a year. As we recognize Breast Cancer Awareness Month this October, we must reach out to our loved ones and ensure that everyone remembers to get the screening and care they need. As always, if I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

Jim

Find more information on the internet:

New York State Health Department: www.nyhealth.gov

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: www.hhs.gov

Medicare: www.medicare.gov

Medicaid: www.medicaid.com

American Cancer Society: www.cancer.org

SHARE Cancer Support: www.sharecancersupport.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: www.cdc.gov

Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester: <http://www.bccr.org>

For an informational breast cancer brochure, please contact my office at (585) 223-1800.