



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

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Breast Cancer Awareness Month

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October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, an ideal time to remind women to get mammograms. It is also a perfect time to highlight a valuable resource available in New York – the Adelphi New York Statewide Breast Cancer Hotline and Support Program.

Breast cancer is the most common cancer in women in the United States, aside from skin cancer. According to the American Cancer Society (ACS), an estimated 207,090 new cases of invasive breast cancer are expected to be diagnosed among women in the United States this

year. An estimated 39,840 women are expected to die from the disease in 2010 alone. Today, there are about 2.5 million breast cancer survivors living in the United States.

The two most significant risk factors are being female and getting older. Most women diagnosed with breast cancer have no other known risk factors. Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in women (after lung cancer). While the overwhelming majority of breast cancer cases are found in women, about one percent of all cases affect men.

Women age 40 and older should have a mammogram every year and should continue to do so for as long as they are in good health. While mammograms can miss some cancers, they are still a very good way to find breast cancer. Women in their 20s and 30s should have a clinical breast exam (CBE) as part of a regular exam by a health expert, preferably every 3 years.

While a number of wonderful resources are available to help women learn more about breast cancer, we are fortunate in New York to have one of the best. The Adelphi New York Statewide Breast Cancer Hotline and Support Program is a project of Adelphi University and is the only New York statewide breast cancer hotline. The mission is to educate, support, empower, and advocate for breast cancer patients, professionals and the community. The program provides services to women and men of all ages, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation and socio-economic status. About 3,500 calls are made to the hotline each year and another 350,000 people visit the Adelphi website annually.

The Adelphi program has been in existence since 1980 and is marking its 30th anniversary of providing information, support and hope. One feature that really sets the program apart from similar services is that most of the volunteers who staff the hotline are breast cancer survivors themselves. What this means is that when someone calls the hotline, distraught

over a breast cancer diagnosis and not knowing where to turn, she is immediately met with a knowing, comforting voice and a living example that breast cancer is beatable.

Along with the support hotline, the Adelphi Breast Cancer Program also offers diversified support groups, individual counseling, and family counseling, provided by certified social workers and graduate students. These services are available to women, men, spouses, couples and family members dealing with breast cancer. Approximately 1500 people participate in the counseling program each year.

Community education is another key ingredient in the Adelphi program. The agency offers a free Breast Cancer Forum Series to the community throughout the year. Additionally, the agency sponsors a variety of professional conferences and public hearings. Speakers are also provided at no charge for professional, business, industry and community groups, with a special emphasis on outreach to underserved communities. Literature is distributed at all outreach programs to raise awareness about breast cancer and the need for early detection.

A breast cancer diagnosis is frightening and intimidating, but with the help of Adelphi, individuals and their families have a supportive, compassionate resource to lean on and help beat the disease. To reiterate, there are about 2.5 million breast cancer survivors living in the United States today.

For additional information, call the Adelphi New York Statewide Breast Cancer Hotline & Support Program at 1-800-877-8077 or visit their website, www.adelphi.edu/nysbreastcancer.

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