



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

## Senator Helming, Colleagues Fighting to Include BCCR in Final State Budget

SENATOR PAM HELMING March 19, 2019

| ISSUE: **BREAST CANCER, BREAST CANCER AWARENESS, BREAST AND GYNECOLOGIC CANCERS, BREAST CANCER SCREENINGS**

GENEVA – Senator Pam Helming today announced that she and her New York State Senate colleagues are calling on Governor Cuomo and legislative leaders to include funding for the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester in the final 2019-2020 state budget. This critical money allows BCCR to provide outreach and support services to breast cancer survivors and their loved ones across a 10-county area, including Finger Lakes region and Western and Central New York. Last year, Senator Helming and her colleagues adopted a Senate Resolution awarding BCCR \$300,000 to continue and expand its services. In 2017, Senator Helming and her colleagues achieved \$200,000 in funding for BCCR.

“The Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester has significantly expanded its outreach and services to cancer survivors and their families, especially in our rural communities, because of the support it has received from New York State. Executive Director Holly Anderson and her team are incredibly fierce advocates in the fight against cancer. However, without this funding, BCCR will have to substantially reduce its services and programs, and cancer survivors and their loved ones will have limited options to turn to for support during their battle. My colleagues and I are proud to have worked with the BCCR team to boost its outreach over the past few years. The work that BCCR does saves lives. Budgets are about

priorities, and the Governor and the Senate and Assembly majorities need to join us and make women's health a priority," Senator Helming said.

Senator Rich Funke said, "The great work of the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester (BCCR) is well known to everyone throughout the Finger Lakes. When we provide one dollar in the state budget, they leverage that investment like it was five dollars. We have heard a lot of discussion from my downstate colleagues about protecting women's health and safety, and yet they have done nothing to restore vital funding for BCCR. The health and wellbeing of women in Monroe and Ontario Counties is every bit as important as those in other parts of the state, and full funding must be restored in the final budget. The clock is ticking, and the only question is whether Governor Cuomo, Speaker Heastie, and Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins will answer the bell."

Senator Joseph Robach said, "This is yet another example of the Senate Democrat's out-of-whack priorities. As a longtime friend and supporter of the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester, I have seen firsthand the incredible work that they do for women and families in our region. We have made significant strides to improve breast cancer treatment, prevention, and education over the last several years, thanks in large part to this funding and BCCR. I am hopeful that my Democratic colleagues will come to their senses and make this a priority in the 2019-20 state budget."

Senator Tom O'Mara said, "The Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester is an active and welcome source of support and strength for cancer survivors and their families across our region. The state's ongoing investment and support makes an enormous difference, and it needs to continue."

Senator Patrick Gallivan said, "Like so many others in our community, breast cancer has had a significant impact upon my life and my family. My wife is a breast cancer survivor.

Organizations such as the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester provide important life-saving information and services to prevent, detect, and fight this terrible disease and offer comfort and support to patients and their families. I am proud to work with my Senate colleagues in securing funding to help the coalition continue its service and outreach to the entire region.”

Senator Michael Ranzenhofer said, “I have worked closely with the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester over the years, and the local grassroots organization is truly dedicated to providing support to those touched by a diagnosis of breast cancer. That is why I am joining my colleagues today in calling on Governor Cuomo and legislative leaders to continue funding for services for cancer survivors and their loved ones in this year's budget.”

Senator Robert Ortt said, “BCCR has done an incredible job raising awareness about the importance of getting tested for breast cancer as well as offering critical services for those who are battling cancer. Not only is the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester an informational resource for so many, but it is also a support group for those in need of a friend during what can be an incredibly difficult time – emotionally and physically. We must restore funding for this vital organization because the services it supplies are directly responsible for saving lives across Upstate and Western New York.”

Together, Senator Helming and her colleagues sent a letter to Governor Cuomo in January, shortly after he released his Executive Budget, requesting \$300,000 for BCCR as a line item in the state budget. However, neither the Governor nor the Senate Majority have included this funding in the budget proposals released since then. As the only full-scope, community-based breast cancer organization between Albany and Buffalo, BCCR covers eight Senate Districts and serves 10 counties, including Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates. Funding for BCCR is especially crucial for outreach and programming to those affected by a cancer diagnosis in rural Upstate New

York communities where resources are limited. By interacting with rural communities, BCCR reaches patients who previously may not have had access to health centers due to a lack of transportation.

Past funding in the New York State budget has allowed BCCR to increase awareness of its programs and better engage breast and gynecologic cancer survivors to participate in its annual Peer Advocates Lending Support (PALS) mentorship training. As those who have received a diagnosis of breast or gynecologic cancer come to BCCR for support, survivors trained as PALS mentors provide a foundation of caring through one-to-one contact, helping them connect to needed resources, and instilling confidence in the face of a difficult situation. In addition, BCCR holds dozens of events, workshops, and classes, all of which are free programs. These programs include informational seminars for survivors and their families, gentle yoga classes designed to ease the physical and psychological symptoms of survivors, and programs designed to reduce the severity of fatigue, which is one of the significant long-term effects that cancer survivors report following surgery. Many of these programs are open only to survivors and their families, offering a place to more meaningfully interact with one another and strengthen bonds.