

Senator Pam Helming

Representing the 54th New York Senate District



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Senator Helming Secures \$300,000 for Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester

Senate Passes Resolution Awarding Additional Funds to BCCR for Outreach Initiatives

GENEVA – Senator Pam Helming today announced that the New York State Senate passed a Senate Resolution awarding \$300,000 to the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester (BCCR). This critical funding will assist BCCR with its continued outreach and support services to those impacted by breast cancer in the Wayne-Finger Lakes region.

The Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester is an independent, grassroots organization dedicated to providing educational and support services to survivors living in the Greater Rochester and Finger Lakes regions of Central and Western New York. BCCR provides critical support to those affected by a breast or gynecologic cancer diagnosis, makes access to information and care a priority through education and advocacy, and empowers women and men to participate fully in decisions relating to their cancer diagnosis.

“The Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester continues to expand its outreach and services to more survivors and more rural communities, where access to critical information and services is often lacking. I am grateful to Executive Director Holly Anderson and her team for being such fierce advocates! I am proud to have worked with the BCCR team over the last six months to secure this vital funding. Thanks to our collaborative efforts, we were able to successfully secure additional funding this year to help the Coalition build on the progress they have made over the last couple of years,” **Senator Helming** said.

BCCR Executive Director Holly Anderson said, “We offer sincere gratitude to Senator Helming and our State Senate delegation for securing these funds on behalf of those who are living in the aftermath of breast cancer right here in our region of Upstate New York. This funding ensures that we will be able to continue our support services and educational programming for breast and gynecologic cancer survivors throughout the region who will no longer need to travel to our largest cities for programs and seminars. Healing arts programs, such as Gentle Yoga and Mindfulness & Meditation, as well as educational evening seminars, make a tremendous difference in the lives of so many.”

As the only full-scope community-based breast cancer organization between Albany and Buffalo, the Coalition serves 10 Senate Districts and ten counties including: Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Steuben, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates.

This funding will help BCCR serve more regional survivors. Over 15,000 women and 150 men in New York State are diagnosed with breast cancer each year, many of these people living in the 10-county region. In recent years, BCCR has held dozens of events, workshops, and classes outside of Monroe County, including counties in the Wayne-Finger Lakes region. These include programming such as informational seminars for survivors and their families, gentle yoga classes designed to ease the survivor's physical and psychological symptoms, 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, offering a place to more meaningfully interact with one another and strengthen bonds.

Increased awareness of the Coalition and its programs has enabled the Coalition to better engage breast and gynecologic cancer survivors to participate in their annual PALS (Peer Advocates Lending Support) mentorship training. As those who have received a diagnosis of breast or gynecologic cancer come to the Coalition for support, trained PALS mentors – other survivors – provide a foundation of caring through one-to-one contact, helping them connect to necessary resources, and instilling confidence in the face of a difficult situation. There is an active need to increase the number of PALS mentors throughout the region so that mentor-mentee connections can be closer to home. Also, as procedures and treatments evolve, newer peer mentors with more recent diagnoses might be a better match for new mentees entering the program.

These examples are just a snapshot of the important work the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester has dedicated itself to providing — not only to those in the Greater Rochester Area but also to those women and men living in our more rural communities who lack the resources and choices that can improve the quality of their cancer survivorship.

The award to BCCR is part of a resolution containing a record \$5 million in new funding for women's health initiatives that will help and improve lives across the region and state. Senator Helming successfully fought to secure this additional funding in the 2018-19 state budget to help bolster services available to build strong communities and address serious health issues facing women and their families. The Governor's Executive Budget had proposed cutting these programs by \$475,000, but Senate Helming and her colleagues succeeded in restoring this funding and providing an increase.

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