Advocacy Day Talking Points and Asks

The Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force (Task Force), the Illinois Affiliates of Susan G. Komen for the Cure®, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) and breast cancer advocates across the state are deeply concerned about underfunding of the Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (IBCCP). United by a common goal of preventing cancer deaths in Illinois, the Task Force and ACS CAN also support legislation that mandates an increase in the buying age of tobacco from 18 to 21 years.

Fund the Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program

- Without a state budget in 2016, women seeking cancer screening were turned away from potentially life-saving services. Again in Fiscal Year 2017, Governor Rauner continues to propose a budget that reduces state funding for IBCCP from $14 million to $4 million, a 71% cut.
- Any short-term budget savings will be quickly offset by increases in women suffering, death from more advanced cancers, and far higher treatment costs paid for by Illinois Medicaid, which will ultimately cost taxpayers more. Treatment at later stages is not only less effective, it’s far more expensive: three to five times more.
- Governor Rauner also proposes complete elimination of the Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Program. The Treatment Program allows eligible women diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer to receive medical care through Medicaid. Elimination of the program would dis-enroll women in active treatment from coverage and is a callous and lethal cut.
- Although the Affordable Care Act (ACA) will provide health care services to many uninsured Illinois residents, only 36% of IBCCP enrollees signed up for an insurance option in the first two years of ACA. Many women signing up through the exchange find monthly premiums too expensive and eventually become uninsured again.

Implement the Breast Cancer Excellence in Survival and Treatment (BEST) Act NOW!

- The BEST Act makes numerous improvements to Illinois Medicaid to ensure that women access the highest quality breast care that will help them survive (see separate fact sheet).
- It was signed into law by the Governor in August 2015. Women cannot afford any more delay in implementation of provisions that will help to ensure high quality screening and cancer treatment options.

Tobacco 21: Research found to link breast cancer and smoking

- Smoking increases the risk of getting breast cancer for a variety of women.
- Research has recently found that current smokers with no history of breast cancer have a significantly increased risk for breast cancer compared to women who never smoked with similar family history.
- Postmenopausal women who are also current smokers have increased risk for breast cancer.\(^1\)
- Deterring the start of smoking at a young age has life-saving benefits. A 2013 study found an association with increased risk of breast cancer in women who smoked over 11 years prior to birth of her first child.\(^2\)

Our Asks to Illinois Lawmakers

1. Vote YES to maintain $11 million for IBCCP and protect the lives of Illinois women.
3. Vote YES to increase the minimum buying age for tobacco products in Illinois to 21 years.

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\(^1\) Reynolds, P et al. Journal of the National Cancer Institute, Vol. 96, No. 1, January 7, 2004