

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Monday, October 18, 2010

#### **MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Melanie Scofield, Alyse Chadwick The Scofield Company, 312-280-7702 cell: 708-289-9047

# TEN MEMBERS OF THE METROPOLITAN CHICAGO BREAST CANCER TASK FORCE INVITED TO SERVE ON STATE BOARD

Task Force Applauds New State Initiative for Going Beyond 2009 Legislation to Reduce Racial Health Disparities

Chicago, October 18, 2010 – The Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force (MCBCTF) congratulates ten Task Force representatives who have been asked to serve on the new statewide Quality Breast Cancer Screening and Treatment Board created as a part of a joint initiative of the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services and the Illinois Department of Public Health. Governor Quinn along with DHFS Director Julie Hamos and Public Health Director Dr. Damon Arnold announced the new board at a press conference this afternoon, as part of a new statewide Quality Breast Cancer Screening and Treatment Initiative.

"We are honored to be working in partnership with this new State Board to improve the quality of breast cancer screening and treatment for women across the state," said **Dr. Anne Marie Murphy**, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force. "Our Task Force, created in 2007, is dedicated to eliminating racial health disparities in breast cancer in Chicago, and a major focus of our work has been to increase access to quality care for low-income women enrolled in Medicaid and advocate for increased funding for the state IBCCP program."

Members of the Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force (MCBCTF) Members who will serve on the new state board include:

Dr. David Ansell, President, MCBCTF; Chief Medical Officer, Rush University Medical Center

**Dr. Pam Ganschow**, Director, Breast & Cervical Cancer Screening Program, John H. Stroger Hospital of Cook County, MCBCTF Board Member

**Dr. Paula Grabler**, *Quality Consortium Co-Chair*; Assistant Professor, Lynn Sage Breast Center, Northwestern Memorial Hospital

Eileen Knightly, Director, Breast Care Center, Mercy Hospital, MCBCTF Board Member

Sister Sheila Lyne, CEO and President, Mercy Hospital and original Co-Chair of MCBCTF

Dr. Elizabeth Marcus, Chair, Division of Breast Oncology, John H. Stroger Hospital of Cook County

Dr. Anne Marie Murphy, Executive Director, Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force

Dr. Melissa Simon, Assistant Professor, Northwestern University, MCBCTF Board Member

Ruth Todd, ABMC Breast Center Coordinator/Navigator, Alexian Brothers Robin Troiani MammaCare Training Center, MCBCTF Board Member

**Donna Thompson**, Chief Executive Officer, Access Community Health Network and original Co-Chair of MCBCTF

## New State Initiative Goes Beyond Requirements of 2009 Reducing Breast Cancer Disparities Act

"We are very pleased that the state's new initiative, announced today, implements the provisions that our Task Force fought for in the 2009 Reducing Breast Cancer Disparities Act, and even goes beyond the requirements of the Act" said **Dr. Anne Marie Murphy**, Executive Director of the Task Force. "For the first time, the State will tie reimbursement levels to a requirement that health care facilities collect and report quality data and participate in quality improvement efforts. And through this new Board, the State will take an active role in establishing standards and best practices that will improve breast cancer care for all women. We are proud to be a part of these efforts. "

For the past several years, The Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force has been working closely with Illinois lawmakers to draft and advocate for the passage of **The Reducing Breast Cancer Dispariites Act (P.L. 95-1045)**, which was signed into law on **March 27, 2009**. The Act is aimed at reducing racial disparities in breast cancer mortality and is the basis for the State's new initiative. This Act called for:

- A Mediicaid rate increase for mammograms,
- Expanded elibility guidelines for Medicaid coverage of mammograms,
- Expand the state's capacity and Medicaid beneficiaries access to mammograms by developing a reimbursement rate for mammography at Federally Qualified Health Centers located in underserved areas
- Creation of an expert panel to establish statewide quality standards
- Elimination of co-pays and deductibles for mammography screening in private insurance,
- Requirement that private insurers and state employee healthcare pay for pain medication when necessary for women undergoing breast cancer treatment.
- Creation of a patient navigation program to help women in state programs access breast cancer treatment in a more timely manner,
- Establishment of a patient reminder system for women receiving state coverage,
- Establishment of financial incentives for facilities to track and meet quality standards for mammography

### **Initiative to Increase Participation in Quality Consortium**

In 2009, the **Chicago Breast Cancer Quality Consortium**, a project of the Task Force, became the nation's first federally designated Patient Safety Organization dedicated solely to breast health. With the federal protections provided by this designation, **55** hospitals and the Chicago Department of Public Health signed up in 2009 to join the Consortium project and share quality data to identify deficits and implement strategies to improve breast cancer screening and treatment and reduce disparities. This represents **70 percent** of Metropolitan Chicago hospitals.

"This new statewide initiative will undoubtedly boost participation in this quality data sharing project, which is already remarkably high," said **Dr. David Ansell**, chair of the Task Force and Chief Medical Officer, Rush University Medical Center. "This demonstrates a very strong commitment on the part of our medical community to impact on the overall quality of care for breast health in Chicago and gives us every reason to believe that this project will have a significant long-term impact."

At a press conference on Thursday, October 21, the Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force's **Quality Consortium** will release the results of quality breast cancer screening and treatment data collected during its first year.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

In October 2006, the Sinai Urban Health Institute released a groundbreaking study on alarming disparities in breast cancer mortality rates between African-American and white women in Chicago. The study found that the breast cancer mortality rate for African-American women in Chicago was 68% higher than that of white women, a disparity that cannot be explained by genetics alone. The report dramatically illustrated that over the last 23 years, advances in mammography screening and breast cancer treatment in Chicago have not helped reduce breast cancer mortality for African-American women. The report was a wake-up call to the entire medical community that more needs to be done to improve breast cancer awareness, access, screening and treatment. Today, over 100 organizations and more than 200 breast cancer experts make up the Metropolitan Chicago Breast Cancer Task Force. In October 2007, the Task Force released its first major report, "Improving Quality and Reducing Breast Cancer Mortality in Metropolitan Chicago," with 37 recommendations for addressing racial disparities in breast cancer mortality. In October 2009, the Task Force announced the creation of the Chicago Breast Cancer Quality Consortium.