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Tidewater Breast Cancer Survivors and Advocates Call on Congress to Maintain Commitment to Breast Health Care Access; Ensure Treatment Parity

Susan G. Komen for the Cure Advocates Stress Importance of Access to Cancer Screening

[Norfolk, VA]. 4/21/2015 – Local breast cancer survivors and activists representing Susan G. Komen Tidewater traveled to the nation's capital April 16, joining hundreds of breast cancer activists from across the country to remind our nation's leaders of the importance of access to cancer screening programs — and to call on policy makers to ensure parity of insurance coverage between oral chemotherapy and traditional IV treatments.

“As the health care system continues to evolve, we cannot forget that many people continue to rely on vital safety net programs, such as the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, better known as The Every Woman's Life Program, here in Virginia.” said Miki Donovan, Mission Manager. “We cannot step back from our commitment to ensuring access to quality breast cancer screening and treatment.”

While on Capitol Hill for the day, the Tidewater delegation met with staffers from the offices of Representatives Rob Wittman, Scott Rigell, Robert “Bobby” Scott and J. Randy Forbes and joined other delegations from across Virginia to meet with Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine.

Komen advocates stressed the importance of maintaining the government's commitment to vital safety-net programs, such as the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program, (Every Woman's Life Program). They also stressed the importance of ensuring parity between the way insurance covers oral chemotherapy, which often is governed by prescription drug benefit rules, and traditional IV treatments, which often have lower co-pays.

“Many new cancer drugs are out of reach for patients because of outdated insurance rules that class them as specialty drugs under their prescription drug benefits, requiring significant out-of-pocket costs for patients. Conversely, IV treatments fall under the patient's medical benefits since they are administered at the hospital, and involve lower cost-sharing,” said Lisa Chacon, breast cancer survivor and Special Event and Development Manager for the Susan G. Komen Tidewater Affiliate. “Treatment decisions should be made by patients and their doctor based on what is the best medical option. We should not force patients to make decision based on outdated insurance rules.”

Susan G. Komen is the only breast Cancer organization with a two prong mission: 75% of the money we raise stays here in the Tidewater Community to fund programs that provide breast health/breast cancer services including: screening, mammograms, diagnostics, treatment support, and survivorship. The other 25% goes directly to research to development better treatments and ultimately find the cures. The funds for these programs are raised, in part, by our signature event Race for the Cure, October 10, 2015. Registration is open now; receive a registration discount using the code “advocacy” through Mother's Day (May 10). To register or for more information: www.komentidewater.org.