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SUSAN G. KOMEN COLORADO STATEMENT ON 3-2 VOTE TO KILL BILL TO PROMOTE EARLY DETECTION OF BREAST CANCER BY REMOVING COST AS BARRIER TO CARE

Komen affiliate notes bill could have prevented unnecessary late-stage diagnoses of breast cancer attributable to costly out-of-pocket expenses that bar some from getting care

May 3, 2016 – Denver, Colorado – Despite hearing testimony from three breast cancer survivors during the Senate State, Veterans & Military Affairs Committee that the cost to treat someone whose breast cancer was detected at Stage IV cost 18 times as much as the cost to treat someone whose cancer was detected at Stage I of the disease, the Committee voted 3-2 to postpone indefinitely House Bill 16-1381 (Primavera, Todd), “Early Detection of Cancer.” Committee Chair Ray Scott (R – SD 7), Committee Vice Chair Jerry Sonnenberg (R – SD 1), and Senator Owen Hill (R – SD 10) voted against the bill; Senators Matt Jones (D – SD 17) and Jessie Ulibarri (D – SD 21) voted for the bill.

Susan G. Komen® Colorado released the following statement today following last night’s 3-2 defeat of a bill that would have ensured 100% of costs for medically recommended breast imaging procedures after an inconclusive mammogram result were covered by health insurance plans:

“Susan G. Komen Colorado thanks Representative Dianne Primavera and Senator Nancy Todd for sponsoring this very important bill. However, we are incredibly disappointed in what we believe is a missed opportunity to save lives, lower the costs of medical care, and reduce the need for extensive, invasive treatment that comes with a late-stage diagnoses of breast cancer,” said Keri Kallaway, CEO of Denver-based Susan G. Komen Colorado.

“Every week, we hear from women who have taken responsibility for their health care by purchasing health insurance and seeking out preventive care to have a screening mammogram – but cannot afford the out-of-pocket charges for follow-up breast imaging procedures their doctors have told them they should have due to an inconclusive mammogram result,” Kallaway said. “When choosing between whether to pay for these procedures or put the money toward their family’s rent or mortgage, we know some Colorado women will forego care. This puts these women at risk of not being diagnosed with the disease until noticeable symptoms appear and the cancer has progressed to a later stage - when it has spread beyond the breast, the 5-year relative rate of survivorship decreases, and treatment options are both more invasive and expensive.

“Time and again, research has confirmed: Early detection saves lives. This bill would have meant that cost would not prevent women from getting the medically recommended procedures they need to detect cancer early,” said Kallaway. “The Affordable Care Act provided an important first step by ensuring full coverage for mammograms – however, a mammogram isn’t always enough to detect cancer early. In fact, about 10% of mammograms are inconclusive, requiring different types of imaging procedures to supplement a traditional mammogram by providing more images of the breast, at different angles, to better detect cancer early. While some insurance plans fully cover the costs of those additional breast imaging tests, not all plans do. We believe the cost of these procedures should not prevent women from getting the care they need and being diagnosed at the earliest stage possible.”



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Denver-based Susan G. Komen® Colorado has invested more than \$42 million into 100+ Colorado-based non-profit health clinics, hospitals and community-based organizations to provide life-saving breast cancer care to those in need in 22 counties (Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Eagle, Garfield, Gilpin, Jefferson, Larimer, Logan, Morgan, Park, Phillips, Pitkin, Sedgwick, Summit, Washington, Weld, and Yuma). Komen Colorado's local investments have provided Coloradans with more than:

- *29,700 clinical breast exams;*
- *47,500 mammograms;*
- *19,300 diagnostic tests diagnosing 540 breast cancers; and*
- *1,800 treatment services (surgery, chemotherapy, radiation).*

In addition, the organization has raised nearly \$15.2 million for ground-breaking research to understand risk-factors for the disease, treatment protocols, how the disease metastasizes, and evidence-based interventions to increase survivorship. Learn more at www.komencolorado.org.

Dallas-based Susan G. Komen is the world's largest breast cancer organization, funding more breast cancer research than any other nonprofit while providing real-time help to those facing the disease. Since its founding in 1982, Komen has funded more than \$889 million in research and provided \$1.95 billion in funding to screening, education, treatment and psychosocial support programs serving millions of people in more than 30 countries worldwide. Komen was founded by Nancy G. Brinker, who promised her sister, Susan G. Komen, that she would end the disease that claimed Suzy's life. Visit komen.org or call 1-877 GO KOMEN. Connect with us on social at ww5.komen.org/social.