

Lobby Day | February 2010

Fact Sheet: *Every Woman Counts*

The California Affiliates of Susan G. Komen for the Cure® are seriously concerned about deep cuts to breast health services in the state, as well as additional cuts that have been proposed for next fiscal year. Many of the low-income, uninsured and underinsured women who rely on these vital safety net programs have nowhere else to go for potentially life-saving breast cancer screening, diagnostic and treatment services.

About *Every Woman Counts*

- *Every Woman Counts* provides breast and cervical cancer screening and diagnostic services to low-income, uninsured and underinsured women in California who do not qualify for Medi-Cal.
- 1.2 million women are eligible for breast cancer screening services through *Every Woman Counts*; yet, due to federal and state budget constraints the program only serves about 300,000 California women each year.
- Without the assistance of *Every Woman Counts*, many of these underserved women will delay or completely forego recommended screenings, leading to later diagnoses, larger tumors at diagnosis, fewer treatment options and lower chances for survival.
- Early detection is a key to survival. When breast cancer is detected early, before it spreads beyond the breast, the 5-year relative survival rate is 98 percent. Once the cancer spreads to other parts of the body, survival rates plummet to 23 percent.

Breast Cancer Advocates Call on California's Decision Makers to:

- ✓ **Reopen *Every Woman Counts* to New Entrants As Soon As Possible**
- ✓ **Reinstate Access for Women Age 40 to 49**
- ✓ **Protect State Screening Services from Additional Cuts in FY2011**

Existing Cuts to *Every Woman Counts*

- As of January 1, 2010, *Every Woman Counts* no longer serves women age 40 to 49. In addition, the program is currently closed to all new enrollees for women age 50 and older until July 2010.
- Women age 40 to 49, who are no longer eligible to participate in *Every Woman Counts* thanks to this year's program cuts, make up a third or more of the women screened by the program. Nationally, about 17 percent of breast cancer cases occur in women in their 40s.
- The cuts to *Every Woman Counts* will have a minor impact on the state's budget deficit — saving the state only about \$10 million, or less than 0.5 percent of the state's deficit — but will have grave consequences for California women who will not have access to potentially life-saving mammograms.

Legislation in the Current Session

- The Komen California Affiliates support legislative efforts to reinstate funds for *Every Woman Counts*, including AB 1640 by Assembly Members Noreen Evans and Pedro Nava, and SB 836 by Senator Jenny Oropeza. We also support other efforts to improve access to mammography screening like AB 113 by Assembly Member Andrew Portantino.

Proposed Cuts to Every Woman Counts for FY2011

- Governor Schwarzenegger has called on the federal government to provide an additional \$6.9 billion to help balance the state budget for FY2011. It appears unlikely that the Governor will secure all of the funds necessary to avoid the nearly \$3.5 billion in cuts to the state's health and human services safety net.
- The Governor has outlined cuts to a number of programs that will be "triggered" in FY2011 if adequate additional funds are not secured. Among the potential cuts is a further reduction of \$22.1 million in Proposition 99 funding for the *Every Woman Counts* program in FY2011.
- In addition, the state is considering eliminating the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment program. This program, which is administered by Medi-Cal, provides affordable breast cancer treatment to 9,000 low-income, uninsured women who would not otherwise be eligible for Medi-Cal benefits.

Access to Screening for Women age 40 to 49

- Komen want to ensure that all women have access to breast cancer screening, including women age 40 to 49. The news about changes to *Every Woman Counts* comes on the heels of new mammography screening recommendations recently unveiled by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, which generated significant controversy and confusion for women.
- Some have interpreted the guidelines as a recommendation against mammography for women age 40 to 49. In fact, the task force actually intended to encourage women to talk with their providers and assess their personal risk factors in deciding whether to have a mammogram.
- Insurance companies and eligibility requirements for government screening programs should not create barriers to screening for women ages 40 to 49. Komen is working at the federal and state levels to bring attention to the unique needs of young women with breast cancer, and ensure this population remains a priority when it comes to breast health education.
- The Komen Advocacy Alliance does not want other states to use the new recommendations — or the budget cuts in California — as cover for balancing state budgets by cutting critical breast cancer screening services for the nation's underserved women.

For More Information, visit www.Komen.org.