



MISSOURI SENATE
JEFFERSON CITY

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October Is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

2009 Marks 25 Years of Breast Cancer Awareness

Advocates for breast cancer awareness are using the month of October to create a national dialogue on breast cancer, share information on the disease, and provide greater access for women across our country to screening services.

According to the American Cancer Society, more than 192,000 cases of breast cancer have been reported this year. Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women in the United States (other than skin cancer), and it is the second leading cause of cancer death in women. In addition, the chance of a woman getting breast cancer sometime during her life is about 1 in 8.

There are several risk factors regarding breast cancer that you cannot adjust, including gender, age, genetics, and family history. However, you can lower your risk of breast cancer by modifying risk factors that can be changed, including limiting alcohol use, exercising regularly, and keeping a healthy weight.

The earlier breast cancer is found, the better the chances are that treatment will work. The American Cancer Society recommends the following guidelines for finding breast cancer early in women without symptoms:

- Women age 40 and older should have a screening mammogram every year and should continue to do so for as long as they are in good health;
- Those women in their 20s and 30s should have a clinical breast exam as part of a regular exam by a health expert, at least every three years; and
- Self-breast exams should be conducted by women starting in their 20s.

In the last 25 years, there have been great advances in breast cancer awareness and treatment. However, there is much work still left to be done. Women still need to take charge of

their own breast health by practicing regular self-breast exams to identify any changes, scheduling regular visits and annual mammograms with their health care provider, adhering to prescribed treatments, and knowing the facts about breast cancer recurrence.

The Missouri General Assembly is also working to bring awareness to breast cancer. The [Show Me Healthy Women Program](#), part of a nation-wide effort aimed at reducing the number of breast cancer and cervical cancer cases, provides free breast and cervical cancer screenings to age and income eligible women. Throughout the past two years, the Legislature has been able to increase funding for this program, providing crucial breast and cervical cancer screenings to under-serviced women across our state.

To find out more information about breast cancer awareness, including resources for breast cancer patients, survivors, caregivers, and the general public, you can visit the American Cancer Society's website at www.cancer.org and type in breast cancer in the search field. And for more information on the Show Me Healthy Women Program, please visit www.dhss.mo.gov/BreastCervCancer.

If you have any questions about any other legislative matter, please feel free to contact me at (573) 751-8793 or by e-mail at: delbertscott@senate.mo.gov.

Senator Delbert Scott represents the people of Barton, Benton, Cedar, Dallas, Henry, Hickory, Pettis, Polk and St. Clair counties in the Missouri Senate.

