

Week of October 11, 2010



[Website](#) | [Biography](#) | [Newsroom](#)

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

You may have noticed huge amount of pink around: newspaper ads, cereal boxes, even NFL teams are sporting the color in varying degrees. All this pink is for a very good reason. Pink is the color of Breast Cancer Awareness. Designated as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, October is a time to focus on this very serious disease, why it occurs, and how to stop it. During this time, national public service organizations, professional medical associations, and government agencies work to promote breast cancer awareness, share information on the disease, and provide greater access to screening services.

Several measures pertaining to breast cancer in our state have been enacted into law. The General Assembly modified certain policies relating to the expanded coverage for the treatment of breast cancer through Senate Bill 27 in 1995. More specifically, the legislation made changes to the limits on deductibles, lifetime maximum benefits, and the administration of these benefits.

That same bill also made changes to state law regarding coverage of mammograms. All individual and group health insurance policies providing coverage to any Missourian would be required to provide benefits or coverage for low-dose mammography screenings for any women covered under their policy.

House Bill 1093, passed in 2002, allows Missourians to receive a special breast cancer awareness license plate. Proceeds from these special plates go toward screening, treatment, and follow-up services.

In 2008, the Legislature passed Senate Bill 1105, which created a check-off box on the Missouri individual and corporate income tax forms for contributions to the breast cancer awareness trust fund, encouraging monetary donations for breast cancer services.

According to the American Cancer Society, breast cancer rates decreased by about two percent between 1998 and 2007. Deaths from breast cancer have decreased too since 1990, likely from earlier detection and advances in treatment. While changes in policy

can't be the only thing responsible for this decrease, the efforts made by state lawmakers have had a positive influence on today's Missouri citizens and on the future of medicine.

The topic of breast cancer is one dear to me as I lost my mother, Loneta, to this dreaded disease in 1990. I can say to you, wholeheartedly, that, as technology and science continue to make advances in the realm of breast cancer research, the Missouri General Assembly will continue to work to promote awareness, treatment, and overall health.

As always, please do not hesitate to contact my office with your questions or concerns at any time. We look forward to hearing your comments and suggestions and trying to answer any questions you may have. You can reach us by phone at 866-277-0882 (toll-free) or 573-751-2272, or by fax at 573-526-7381.

Senator David Pearce serves Bates, Cass, Johnson and Vernon counties in the 31st State Senatorial District.

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