

October 7, 2024

The Honorable Charles Schumer
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Johnson
United States House of Representatives
568 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
United States House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Johnson, Majority Leader Schumer, Minority Leader Jeffries, and Minority Leader McConnell:

The undersigned organizations, which represent patients and providers across the country, urge Congress to swiftly pass the Screening for Communities to Receive Early and Equitable Needed Services (SCREENS) for Cancer Act. This bicameral and bipartisan legislation would reauthorize the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP) for another five years, empowering NBCCECP to continue its over three decades of providing quality breast and cervical health services. As the end of the 118th Congress draws near, we implore you to prioritize the reauthorization of a program which has long served communities across the country.

The NBCCEDP provides lifesaving breast and cervical cancer screening, diagnostic services, and navigation into treatment to low-income, uninsured or underinsured people in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, two U.S. territories, five U.S.-affiliated Pacific Islands and 13 tribes or tribal organizations. Since its founding in 1991, NBCCEDP has served more than 6.3 million people detecting nearly 79,000 invasive breast cancers, over 25,000 premalignant breast lesions, more than 5,000 cervical cancers, and over 245,000 premalignant cervical lesions. The program, which is a partnership between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and state health departments, provides public education, outreach, patient navigation and care coordination to increase breast and cervical cancer screening rates and reach underserved, vulnerable populations. NBCCEDP funding also supports interventions which help address inequities in breast and cervical cancer screening and diagnosis, placing special emphasis on reaching people who are geographically or culturally isolated and/or from racial or ethnic minorities. The program focuses on factors at the interpersonal, organizational, community and policy levels that influence screening.

The program remains as crucial as ever. Last reauthorized in 2007, NBCCEDP has a legacy of reaching underserved populations and providing high-quality care, giving people across the country access to needed breast and cervical health services. Data shows that the COVID-19 pandemic caused people to delay or forego life-saving cancer screenings, which will lead to more advanced cancers and increase related mortality. For breast and cervical cancer, studies show that screening prevalence decreased by 6% and 11%, respectively, between 2018 and 2020. Research suggests that those postponed breast screenings appeared to disproportionately affect women of color: Non-Hispanic white women had 17% fewer breast cancer diagnoses, while the year-over-year decline was 53% for Asian women, 43% for Hispanic women and 27% for Black women. Data released as recently as this year confirm that the

decline in screening rates persisted throughout the pandemic and rates have still not returned to normal levels. This legislation will help counteract these alarming trends.

The SCREENS for Cancer Act preserves access to vital public health infrastructure that has a proven track record of improving cancer screening rates in vulnerable populations. This legislation would provide greater flexibility to NBCCEDP grantees, allowing for a greater emphasis on implementing innovative evidence-based interventions and aggressive outreach to communities through media, peer educators and patient navigators. Reauthorizing the NBCCEDP will enable a deeper reach into underserved communities, leading to more people being screened, more cancers being diagnosed at earlier stages and ultimately better outcomes for people at lower costs to our health care system.

Given the importance of this program and its proven impact, we respectfully ask for your support in including the SCREENS for Cancer Act in any end-of-year legislative efforts. The SCREENS for Cancer Act is a bipartisan effort to support a public health program with a long legacy of increasing access to breast and cervical cancer early detection for people across the country. The bill has enjoyed overwhelming bipartisan support and has been favorably reported out of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee as well as the House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee. We encourage your support and urge you to take swift action to see the SCREENS for Cancer Act enacted before the end of the Congress.

We look forward to working with you on this important legislation. If you need anything or have questions, please reach out to Valerie Nelson, Susan G. Komen's Manager of Federal Policy & Advocacy, at vnelson@komen.org.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Women's Health and Prevention
Association of Cancer Care Centers
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Sexual Health Association
Brem Foundation to Defeat Breast Cancer
Cancer Support Community
Check for a Lump
Equal Hope
FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered
Living Beyond Breast Cancer
Men Supporting Women with Breast Cancer
My Style Matters, Inc.
NAACP
National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health
National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship
National Comprehensive Cancer Network
National Women's Health Network
Oncology Nursing Society
Prevent Cancer Foundation
Sharsheret
Sisters Network Inc

SHARE Cancer Support
Society of Breast Imaging
Susan G. Komen
The National Consortium of Breast Centers
The Pink Fund
Tigerlily Foundation
TOUCH, The Black Breast Cancer Alliance
Triple Negative Breast Cancer Foundation
Young Survival Coalition

cc: House of Representatives Committee on Energy and Commerce, Senate Committee on Health,
Education, Labor, and Pensions