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Ohio Breast Cancer Survivors and Advocates Call on Congress to Maintain Commitment to Breast Health Care Access; Ensure Treatment Parity

CLEVELAND – Local breast cancer survivors and activists representing Susan G. Komen Northeast Ohio traveled to the nation's capital April 16, joining hundreds of breast cancer activists from across the country to remind our nation's leaders of the importance of access to cancer screening programs and to call on policy makers to ensure parity of insurance coverage between oral chemotherapy and traditional IV treatments.

"As the health care system continues to evolve, we cannot forget that many people continue to rely on vital safety net programs, such as the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program," said Gina Chicotel, Director of Mission for Komen Northeast Ohio. "We cannot step back from our commitment to ensuring access to quality breast cancer screening and treatment."

While on Capitol Hill for the day, the Northeast Ohio delegation met with the offices of Rep. David Joyce, Rep. Marcia Fudge, Rep. Tim Ryan and Rep. Bill Johnson and joined other delegations from across Ohio to meet with the offices of Sen. Rob Portman and Sen. Sherrod Brown.

Komen advocates stressed the importance of maintaining the government's commitment to vital safety-net programs, such as the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. They also stressed the importance of ensuring parity between the way insurance covers oral chemotherapy, which often is governed by prescription drug benefit rules, and traditional IV treatments, which often have lower co-pays.

"Many new cancer drugs are out of reach for patients because of outdated insurance rules that class them as specialty drugs under their prescription drug benefits, requiring significant out-of-pocket costs for patients. Conversely, IV treatments fall under the patient's medical benefits since they are administered at the hospital and involve lower cost-sharing," said Chicotel. "Treatment decisions should be made by patients and their doctor based on what is the best medical option. We should not force patients to make decisions based on outdated insurance rules."

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About Susan G. Komen Northeast Ohio:

Susan G. Komen Northeast Ohio is working to better the lives of those facing breast cancer in the local community. Through events like the Komen Northeast Ohio **Cleveland and Akron Race for the Cure**, Komen **Northeast Ohio** has invested nearly \$15 million in community breast health programs in its **22-county region of Northeast Ohio** and has helped contribute to the more than \$800 million invested globally in research. For more information, call **216-292-2873** or visit www.kommenohio.org. Connect with us on Facebook at [facebook.com/kommenohio](https://www.facebook.com/kommenohio) and Twitter [@KomenNEOhio](https://twitter.com/KomenNEOhio).

About Susan G. Komen®:

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 \$847 million in research and provided \$1.8 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 Facebook at [facebook.com/susangkomen](https://www.facebook.com/susangkomen) and Twitter [@SusanGKomen](https://twitter.com/SusanGKomen).

CONTACT:

Jennifer Farrell, Event and Marketing Associate, Komen Northeast Ohio
216-292-2873 ext. 106, jfarrell@komenneohio.org