



National Breast Cancer Coalition Programs

ABCF is a member organization of the National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC) and has a seat on NBCC's board of directors. Prior to 2000, members of the NBCC board were concerned that women diagnosed through the Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program who were poverty level, uninsured and ineligible for Medicaid coverage were left to rely on a system of dwindling care. NBCC advocates believed a program that uses federal funds to screen and diagnose women with breast cancer had to be coupled with a treatment component. After years of NBCC grassroots lobbying and influence, Congress enacted the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Program (BCCTP) in 2000 as federal law, the Breast and Cervical Treatment Act, which expanded access to healthcare for thousands of underserved women. The Act authorizes enhanced matching funds to states to provide Medicaid coverage to uninsured and underinsured women screened and diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer through a federal program. All 50 states and the District of Columbia have opted into the program, but efforts to reduce funding for Medicaid or dramatically alter the program is always a threat. NBCC advocates, including ABCF members, lobby Congress annually to protect and preserve BCCTP.

After the passage of the Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Act, ABCF advocates lobbied the Texas Legislature in 2000 and 2001 to opt into the program through the state/federal match established by the Act. This was not easily accomplished, but ABCF finally convinced Governor Perry to sign into law Senate Bill (SB) 532, the Texas version of the Act. Within the framework of this state/federal match program administered by Medicaid, Texas contributes 28% of the funding, which is matched by 72% in federal funding. The program is administered by the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSH) Breast Cancer Control Services (BCCS). ABCF advocates lobby the Texas legislature every session to ensure that the program is adequately funded. Since becoming active in NBCC advocacy efforts at a federal level, ABCF advocates have worked with focused dedication and dogged determination to urge Texas Senators and Representatives in the U.S. Congress to support an annual appropriation for the Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program (BCRP), established in 1992 largely as a result of NBCC's grassroots advocacy. Another area in which ABCF has been a strong supporter of NBCC's advocacy efforts at a federal level is making access to quality healthcare for all a top priority. The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, also known as simply The Affordable Care Act (ACA), that was passed last year in the U.S. Congress is a significant step forward toward this goal and provides many important protections for breast cancer survivors. Repealing or invalidating this law would have direct adverse consequences for breast cancer patients and survivors.