

Hi, I'm Donna Rogers. I live in Higganum; and I am a 7-year breast cancer survivor. First, I want to thank you for leaving the funding for the breast and cervical cancer early screening program in this year's budget.

I am here because of early screening. I was fortunate to work for an employer who provided access to health care for his employees; so I was able to have annual mammograms. My tumor was tiny when it was discovered; and my required treatment was minimal compared to what many go through once the cancer is more advanced. I lost a dear friend to breast cancer the year before I was diagnosed because she was not able to afford yearly screenings.

As part of my journey with cancer, I have drawn closer to my family and become more active in my church and my community. Most importantly, I have been privileged to mentor other women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer.

I feel very fortunate; but I feel it is important for all women to have the same opportunities I had. When detected early, breast cancer is a lot less expensive to treat than when it is diagnosed in stages III and IV; and the survival rate for women diagnosed at stage I is 99%.

The thousands of women in Connecticut, who aren't fortunate enough to have insurance, like I did, rely on the state's Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. This vital program provides free mammograms and Pap tests in an effort to detect cancer at its earliest stages when the chances for survival are best and the cost of care is the lowest. Maintaining funding will ensure that these women continue to have access to the screening that could save their lives. A breast cancer diagnosis doesn't need to be a death sentence for anyone.

Again, thank you for leaving this item untouched in the current budget; and I would urge you to continue to support it in future budgets.