

March 26, 2021
Jan Kritzman
Newington CT

Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Jan Kritzman. I am an eight-and-a-half-year breast cancer survivor. I am a patient-advocate for Dense Breast Tissue Awareness and the Early Detection of Breast Cancer.

I recommend that there be specific mention in HB 6662 of the fact that breast cancer is epidemic in the demographic of young women of color. They are often diagnosed in their 20's and 30's, with late-stage breast cancer, often Triple Negative (TNBC), a type which is difficult to treat.

There is no prevention of Breast Cancer; no vaccine; no warp speed. The only tool in the tool box we have to improve long-term survival is Early Detection.

Many who have testified in support of HB 6662 have mentioned reasons for both poor health conditions and outcomes for people of color.

Example:

Poor health insurance

Co-morbidities

Lack of transportation for
testing, treatments and
follow-up medical visits

Limited access to purchase
affordable fresh,
healthy food

Lack of information and
reluctance to discuss

And much more.....

I have a suggestion regarding Breast Health Education in our schools, which is lacking in the State of Connecticut's Health Education curriculum.

I suggest that breast cancer awareness and breast self-examination be taught starting in Middle School, when girls become women, begin to menstruate, and develop breasts.

I believe young women of color, particularly, need to be educated about Breast Cancer at a young age; it is the only path to early detection. They also need to learn about their family history.

In addition, testicular cancer awareness and self-examination should also be part of the curriculum, as well.

Testicular cancer affects young men, often in their late teens and twenties.

There is a desperate need for this type of education, best presented in the classroom, where instruction would be standardized and uniform, with Q and A from a qualified educator.

I do believe that Middle Schoolers are not too young to learn about early detection and such essential life-saving health habits.

The cost of adding this subject matter to the Health Education program in our schools would be minimal.

But the potential of saving lives will be immeasurable.

Jan Kritzman
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