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PASSAGE OF SENATE BILL 433 CLOSES GAP IN OREGON HEALTHCARE SYSTEM, GIVES UNINSURED WOMEN A FIGHTING CHANCE

June 20, 2011 – The Oregon and SW Washington Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure is thrilled to announce the passage of Senate Bill 433, the Affiliate's key priority for the current legislative session. The bill will expand Oregon Breast and Cervical Cancer Program (OBCCP) eligibility for women diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer, changing the law to serve **all** eligible women, regardless of where they receive their diagnosis. The bill passed unanimously both in the House and the Senate.

The Oregon Breast and Cervical Cancer Program helps low-income, uninsured, and medically underserved women gain access to lifesaving screening programs for early detection of breast and cervical cancers. Each year, approximately 7,000 eligible individuals receive screening services.

Funding for this program is provided by the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Oregon and SW Washington Affiliate and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Prior to the passage of Senate Bill 433, a decade old loophole in the program made even a qualified woman diagnosed outside of the limited OBCCP provider network **ineligible** for breast or cervical cancer treatment coverage. This lack of treatment access resulted in a desperate need to search for charity care or postpone medical care until advanced symptoms required an emergency room visit.

When breast cancer is caught early, the five year survival rate is an optimistic 98%. Many of these women, without insurance or financial resources, were often treated for their breast or cervical cancer at a late stage when their chance of surviving the disease is significantly decreased, and the cost of treatment is much more expensive.

Thanks to the passage of this bill an estimated 144 eligible women will have access to the OBCCP program, even if they are diagnosed through a non-OBCCP provider. Komen Oregon's Chief Executive Officer, Christine M. McDonald, spoke on behalf of the Affiliate, noting "the passage of this bill is a victory for local women and their families. It closes a gap in the healthcare system, ending a completely intolerable situation for uninsured women. Now more women's treatment will be covered and their lives will be saved. We applaud the bi-partisan support of this life-saving legislation. There are many gaps in our healthcare system – but this is one we can close, and did."

This bill has been a priority for the Affiliate over two previous legislative sessions. The Affiliate mobilized the strength of Komen supporters throughout the local service area to make lawmakers aware of the importance of this bill. Phone, letter writing and email campaigns were

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all part of the Affiliate's aggressive effort to raise awareness and rally support for the passage of Senate Bill 433.

"This vital legislation will provide life-saving treatment for low-income women diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer," said Senate Majority Leader Diane Rosenbaum (D-Portland), chief sponsor of the bill and a breast cancer survivor. "Poor women without insurance are forty-one percent more likely to receive a late stage diagnosis, and three times more likely to die. With the passage of Senate Bill 433 we can ensure that low-income women who are diagnosed with breast or cervical cancer receive prompt and comprehensive treatment, regardless of where they receive their diagnosis."

About the Oregon and SW Washington Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure

In 2011 Komen Oregon celebrates 20 years fighting to better the lives of those facing breast cancer in our community. We join more than two million breast cancer survivors and activists around the globe as part of the world's largest and most progressive grassroots network fighting breast cancer. Through events like the Komen Portland Race for the Cure and Eugene Race for the Cure, we have invested over \$12 million since 2002 in local breast health and breast cancer awareness projects in Oregon and SW Washington. Our presence in the local community helps raise awareness about the importance of early detection and breast cancer. We've made tremendous progress in the fight against breast cancer with mortality rates down 31 percent in 20 years - but until no one fears a diagnosis of breast cancer, we still have a lot of work to do. Join our promise by calling 503-552-9160 or visiting us online at www.komenoregon.org.

About Susan G. Komen for the Cure

Nancy G. Brinker promised her dying sister, Susan G. Komen, she would do everything in her power to end breast cancer forever. In 1982, that promise became Susan G. Komen for the Cure and launched the global breast cancer movement. Today, Komen for the Cure is the world's largest grassroots network of breast cancer survivors and activists fighting to save lives, empower people, ensure quality care for all and energize science to find the cures. Thanks to events like the Komen Race for the Cure® and the Susan G. Komen 3-Day for the Cure®, we have invested more than \$1.9 billion to fulfill our promise, becoming the largest source of nonprofit funds dedicated to the fight against breast cancer in the world. For more information about Susan G. Komen for the Cure, breast health or breast cancer, visit komen.org or call 1-877 GO KOMEN.



Pictured (from left): Jennifer Williamson, Komen Board Advocacy Chair, Senate Majority Leader and Chief Sponsor of Legislation, Senator Diane Rosenbaum, Komen Chief Executive Officer, Christine McDonald, Senior Legislative Staff to Senator Rosenbaum, Megan Osborne.