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Advocates and Survivors Host 5th Annual Young Women's Breast Health Day on Capitol Hill Addressing Metastatic Breast Cancer

Young women from across the country visit Capitol Hill to meet lawmakers, share personal stories of survival and urge policymakers to ensure access to screening, more research and more effective treatment for young women with metastatic breast cancer

WASHINGTON, DC – Tigerlily Foundation – a leading national breast cancer organization educating, empowering, advocating for and providing support for young women affected by breast cancer – is today hosting its fifth annual [Young Women's Breast Health Day on the Hill](#) with Congresswoman Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL). Young women are visiting Capitol Hill today to advocate for early breast health education, screenings, detection, treatments and research.

A briefing titled, **“Metastatic Young (MY) Living in Focus Empowered (LIFE): A Focus on Young Women Living with Metastatic Breast Cancer (MBC),”** will feature a panel of researchers, advocacy organization leaders, healthcare providers, congressional leaders and breast cancer survivors discussing the issues, gaps and disparities young women face with metastatic breast cancer (MBC) and opportunities for growth in these areas. Panelists will highlight the need for more metastatic research funding and treatment advances to extend life, improve survivorship and quality of life for younger women diagnosed with breast cancer.

"Young Women's Breast Health Day on the Hill is such an important part of our work to help young women understand the risks they face from breast cancer. It's always such an honor and pleasure to join my dear friend Maimah Karmo and the Tigerlily Foundation, for this annual event. Maimah helped me draft the EARLY Act back in 2009 to empower young women with the knowledge and resources they need to be their own best advocates, and her work and personal story continues to touch so many women around the country in the breast cancer community," said Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (FL-23).

Metastatic breast cancer is advanced breast cancer that has spread beyond the breast to other organs in the body and claims more than 40,000 lives a year. There are an estimated 155,000 people living with metastatic breast cancer in the US today and even patients who could appear to be "cured" of cancer can still face the suffering of metastasis months or years down the road. Tumor cells that shed from the primary tumor could remain hidden in the body only to become re-activated later and grow in a new organ.

According to the American Cancer Society, breast cancer is the number one cause of cancer death in young women under the age of 50 and approximately six to 10 percent of new breast cancer cases are initially metastatic. Thirty percent of breast cancer patients who are treated successfully for their primary disease could later be diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer.

Even with impactful statistics, the funding discrepancy is devastating for those affected by metastatic cancer. More than 90 percent of cancer patients are dying from cancer metastasis, but only 2.3 percent of cancer research dollars (11 million out of 485 million) in the US has gone to research developed to improve outcomes for patients specifically suffering from metastatic cancer.

“Today, we aim to address and educate the policymaking community about this young demographic of women, ages 15-45, who are often diagnosed with breast cancer at a much higher risk than women diagnosed over age 45. It is critical to bring more attention to the needs of this important population and to allocate more research dollars to metastatic breast cancer,” said Maimah Karmo, President of the Tigerlily Foundation.

Breast screening is important for women regardless of their race, ethnicity or risk of breast cancer. Some are less likely to get a screening based on their income, health insurance, lack of awareness or access to care.

To raise awareness about the importance of screenings, the Tigerlily Foundation was instrumental in the passage of The Protecting Access to Lifesaving Screenings (PALS) Act, introduced in both the Senate (S.1926) and House (H.R. 3339). This piece of legislation protects access to mammograms for women ages 40-74 by placing a two-year moratorium on implementing the United States Preventive Services Task (USPSTF) breast cancer screenings recommendations. Tigerlily Foundation continues to educate congressional staff and members on the importance of access to mammogram screenings.

There are more than 250,000 women under age 45 living in the United States who have been touched by breast cancer. Approximately 18,000 are diagnosed annually, including 10 percent who lose their lives to the disease. This event serves as a forum to engage the community about the importance of educating young women, families, physicians, health groups and legislation about the life threatening issues facing young women affected by breast cancer and how to better prevent them.

“It is our hope that through this event, we build a Young Women’s Breast Health Alliance, focusing on young women’s wellness that convenes annually,” said Karmo. “As survivors and advocates, it is important to collectively stand for and support one another to help ensure that all young women have access to breast health education, screenings, treatments, better quality of life and health outcomes.”

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About Tigerlily Foundation: A leading national breast cancer organization whose mission is to educate, empower, advocate for and provide support to young women 15-45—before, during and after breast cancer. This foundation

contains more than 300 volunteers nationwide, providing breast health, wellness and transformational programs to young women in more than 43 states. To learn more, visit <http://tigerlilyfoundation.org>.