

Good day Council Members,

My name is Daisy Okudo,

I am a cosmetologist and I volunteer with the Look Good Feel Better Program, at the Aquilino Cancer Center at Shady Grove Hospital, where I interact with Breast Cancer patients and educate them on how to take care of hair loss resulting from Cancer treatment.

It is my objective to advocate for enhanced efficiency in the processing of Uninsured Breast Cancer Patients in Montgomery County, as they seek access to timely and effective eligibility evaluation, diagnosis and treatment of this killer disease.

Presently, the process takes upwards of two months before a Breast Cancer Patient gets a chance to be properly diagnosed, a professional mammogram done, and for treatment to commence.

It takes 4 phone calls across 2 Counties to get through to a Breast Cancer Specialist.

When you call the Department of Health and Human Services line 240-777-1750, in **Montgomery County** – Women’s Cancer Control Screening Line,

you are directed to call a vendor -Primary Care Coalition (PCC) on 301-628-3458

When you call PCC, you are directed to call 301-600-3362 in **Frederick County**.

You are then eventually directed to call the Specialist in charge of Breast Cancer on 301-471-7663, who now activates the Eligibility Evaluation Process.

Currently, Eligibility takes one to two weeks- to get approved for Mammogram screening (Mailing of Forms, etc)

Then another two weeks to get the screening exam vouchers/ schedule an appointment to see a physician. There is another week to get the test result of the Mammogram.

Depending on the test result, treatment now starts- more than 2 months after a lump is detected by a patient.

Given the risk of rapid degradation of the condition, as well as the Metastasis to other parts of the body, this time frame is considered too long, and requires urgent review and improvement.

According to the American Cancer Society, Breast Cancer is the second most frequently diagnosed cancer for women in the United States, and, when detected early, treatment has the greatest chance of success.

Some of the noted inefficiencies include the lack of a central portal where inquiries can be safely, professionally, and expeditiously handled, with qualifying cases progressed towards much-needed clinical intervention.

A situation where a Breast Cancer patient, who is dealing with critical physical and mental issues, must make repeat calls to different stations/ numbers, some of which are located outside the County, is considered rather sub-optimal and unreflective of the gravity and urgency that Breast Cancer compels.

In many cases, it is difficult and time-consuming to obtain the valid numbers to be called, with the risks and frustrations attached thereto.

Given the prevalence and impact of Breast Cancer on families and society, I would earnestly recommend the establishment of a One-Stop Facility within the County, which Breast Cancer patients can access either physically or virtually.

Thank you.