



News From
The California Women's Law Center

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Stop "Drive-Through" Mastectomies
Support the Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act

Join CWLC in urging Congress to pass the bi-partisan Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act of 2005 (S 910/HR1849). Most physicians believe that most breast cancer patients require a hospital stay following a mastectomy. Despite the prevailing medical standard of two to four days to recuperate, insurance companies often refuse to cover hospitalization. Women find themselves forced to leave the hospital before they are ready -- sometimes just hours after surgery while still in pain, groggy with anesthesia and with drainage tubes still in place. This ridiculous practice has become known as a "drive-through" mastectomy and it can have serious consequences to a women's health. The Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act would allow a woman and her doctor to make a treatment decision in the best interest of the patient.

The Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act would:

- Guarantee a minimum hospital stay of 48 hours for a woman having a mastectomy or lumpectomy, and 24 hours for a woman undergoing a lymph node removal;
- Require health plans to include notice of these benefits in their monthly mailing and yearly information packet sent to plan participants;
- Require plans to provide full coverage for second opinions should the patient seek one;
- Require that plans cover the treatment option most suitable in each breast cancer patient's case. In some cases, a lumpectomy followed by radiation is the recommended treatment for women with an early stage of breast cancer, yet some women undergo a medically unnecessary mastectomy instead because their health care plan lacks lumpectomy coverage. The bill ensures that lumpectomy is covered.

The Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act of 2005 neither mandates a 48 hour hospital stay, nor does it set 48 hours as a maximum amount of time a woman can stay in the hospital. It simply ensures that decisions will be made by the patient and her doctor.

Previous versions of this legislation have stalled in committee, but the Breast Cancer Patient Protection Act of 2005 (S 910/HR 1849) has 179 bipartisan cosponsors in the

House and 17 in the Senate. You can support this legislation by signing Lifetime Television Network's online petition and by contacting your member of Congress and urging them to support final passage.

Sign the petition at <http://www.lifetime.com/breastcancer/petition/signpetition.php>
Locate and contact your member of Congress at <http://www.house.gov/>.

Did you know...

- In 2006, an estimated 212,920 new cases of invasive breast cancer will be diagnosed among women in the United States?. More than 40,000 women will die of breast cancer. (Source: American Cancer Society)
- In the United States, one out of eight women will develop breast cancer in her life? (Source: National Cancer Institute)
- In the United States, breast cancer is the most common non-skin cancer and the second leading cause of cancer-related death in women, after lung cancer? (Source: American Cancer Society)
- Approximately 3 million women in the U.S. are living with breast cancer: 2.3 million who have been diagnosed and an estimated 1 million who do not yet know they have the disease? (Source: National Breast Cancer Coalition)
- Every woman is at risk for breast cancer. About 90% of women who develop breast cancer do not have a family history of the disease? (Source: National Breast Cancer Coalition)
- African-American women are more likely to die from breast cancer at every age? (Source: National Breast Cancer Coalition)

About the California Women's Law Center

Since its founding in 1989, the California Women's Law Center has worked in collaboration with others to protect, secure and advance the comprehensive civil rights of women and girls. CWLC has unparalleled expertise in strategies to protect and advance women's rights with programs to empower individuals to use the law to address the societal and legal issues that perpetuate ongoing gender inequity, women's health issues, reproductive justice and violence against women.

Learn more at www.cwlc.org