



Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, TN

Legislation Text

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A resolution in support of Nashville women diagnosed with breast cancer and of breast cancer awareness in the month of October and throughout the year.

WHEREAS, cancer is the second leading cause of death in the United States exceeded only by heart disease, and one of every four deaths in the United States is due to cancer; and

WHEREAS, one in eight women -- 12.5% of women in America -- will contract breast cancer within their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, cancer is a group of diseases characterized by uncontrolled growth and spread of abnormal cells that can result in death if not treated. Although causes of cancer are not fully understood, numerous factors are known to increase risk, including many that are potentially modifiable including tobacco use, excess body weight, and lack of sleep and other factors that are not such as inherited genetic mutations. These risk factors may act simultaneously or in sequence to initiate and/or promote cancer growth; and

WHEREAS, while having a mother or sister with breast cancer can double a woman's risk, less than 15% of women with breast cancer have a family history of the disease; and

WHEREAS, 968 women in Tennessee died of breast cancer in 2019, of whom 80 were Nashvillians; and

WHEREAS, according to the American Cancer Society, in the U.S. in 2021, there will be an estimated 281,550 new cases of invasive breast cancer and 49,290 cases of ductal carcinoma in situ (DCIS) diagnosed in women and an estimated 44,130 breast cancer deaths; and

WHEREAS, from 2008 to 2017, invasive female breast cancer incidence rates increased by about 0.5% per year; and

WHEREAS, since its peak in 1989, the female breast cancer death rate declined by 41% in 2018 because of earlier detection through screening, as well as increased awareness of symptoms, and improved treatment. This decrease translates to approximately 403,200 fewer breast cancer deaths during this time period than would have been expected in the absence of this progress. However, the pace of the decline has slowed from almost 2% annually during the 2000s to 1% per year from 2013 to 2018; and

WHEREAS, early detection is key to breast cancer survival. Women are encouraged, especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, not to skip their annual mammography screenings; and

WHEREAS, in 2009, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommended that routine screening mammograms for women with an average risk of breast cancer should start at age 50 instead of age 40, but the recommended changes were very controversial and were not universally adopted. Since that time, the American Medical Association, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the American College of Radiology, the American Cancer Society, the National Cancer Institute, and the National Comprehensive Cancer Network all have issued guidelines stating that all women should be eligible for screening mammograms starting at age 40; and

WHEREAS, 80% of women in Davidson County age 50 to 74 have had a mammogram in the last two years,

compared to 77% in Tennessee and the national average of 75%; and

WHEREAS, lack of health insurance prevents many Americans from receiving optimal cancer prevention, early detection, and treatment. Uninsured individuals and those from other marginalized populations are substantially more likely to be diagnosed with cancer at a later stage, when treatment is often more intensive, costlier, and less successful; and

WHEREAS, the Tennessee Breast and Cervical Screening Program of Nashville/Davidson County, administered by the Metropolitan Public Health Department, offers free screening mammograms to uninsured or underinsured low-income women beginning at age 40; and

WHEREAS, women with breast cancer will have a variety of treatment plans depending on the type and stage of their cancer. In recent years, advocacy groups have formed as part of the "Going Flat" movement to increase awareness and acceptance of mastectomy with aesthetic flat closure rather than reconstruction. In research published in January 2021 in the Annals of Surgical Oncology, nearly 75% of women surveyed who opted for no breast reconstruction after mastectomy were satisfied with the results; and

WHEREAS, during lumpectomy or mastectomy surgery to remove an original diagnosis of breast cancer, the surgeon removes all the cancer that can be seen and felt. But tests for cancer are not yet sensitive enough to detect tiny groups of cancer cells that may be left over after surgery. It is possible for isolated groups of cells to survive radiation therapy and chemotherapy intended to reduce the risk of recurrence, and even a single cell that escaped treatment may be able to multiply and grow into a tumor; and

WHEREAS, a breast cancer recurrence, or "recurrent breast cancer," is cancer that has come back in the same or opposite breast or chest wall after a period of time when the cancer could not be detected. There can be local, regional, or distant recurrences. When breast cancer comes back in other areas of the body, it is called "metastatic." Metastatic breast cancer is stage IV breast cancer; and

WHEREAS, due to fear of recurrence, breast cancer patients may struggle with how best to describe themselves after their treatment concludes. Some find strength in calling themselves a "survivor," but it is important to listen closely to women with breast cancer and let them choose the words to best describe their own journey; and

WHEREAS, cancer is often described as a "battle," and while this language may be encouraging to some, it is important to remember and acknowledge that no one dies from cancer because they did not "fight" hard enough; and

WHEREAS, communities of support are essential for the mental health of people diagnosed with cancer. Free classes and support groups, such as those offered in Nashville by Gilda's Club of Middle Tennessee, are helpful for cancer patients and their loved ones during and after treatment. American Cancer Society, breastcancer.org and other organizations provide research and educational resources, online support forums, and other supportive services for women living with breast cancer; and

WHEREAS, October's Breast Cancer Awareness Month is an opportunity to highlight and share helpful information and encourage women to focus on their well-being, general health, and breast health. Breast cancer awareness, education, and support is important throughout the entire year.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE METROPOLITAN GOVERNMENT OF NASHVILLE AND DAVIDSON COUNTY:

Section 1. The Metropolitan Council hereby goes on record as expressing its support for all Nashville women living with breast cancer and their families, and for the medical professionals working to support their patients and prevent and cure breast cancer.

Section 2. This Resolution shall take effect from and after its adoption, the welfare of The Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County requiring it.