

Breast Cancer Awareness

Written by David Vitter
Monday, 08 October 2012 08:18 -



October is National Breast Cancer Awareness month, and it's a time to be reminded about the importance of cancer screening and prevention. As a child, my wife Wendy lost her mother to this disease. Her loss serves as a constant reminder of how important it is to increase early detection and preventive screenings and expand access to care for this disease that affects so many of our family, friends and neighbors.

Every year, breast cancer affects tens of thousands of women throughout the United States, and the chance of a woman contracting this disease in her lifetime is one in eight. The most recent data from the American Cancer Society estimated that in 2011 more than 230,000 cases of breast cancer would be diagnosed, and of that number, 40,000 women would ultimately lose their lives. This means that many of us personally know someone who has been affected by breast cancer, which is all the more reason to recognize Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

I've been working on several initiatives in Congress to fight this disease, like my legislation to expand access to mobile mammography services. This would help provide more on-site mammograms to women in both urban and rural areas that may not currently receive screenings and preventive care. And after the Obama administration's U.S. Preventive Services Task Force actually recommended fewer mammograms for women, I successfully introduced and passed an amendment to stop these recommendations from being used to deny women the coverage they may need.

In recent years I've also fought against the Food and Drug Administration's move to take the drug Avastin "off-label."

Avastin is a treatment for metastatic (stage IV) breast cancer, but the FDA essentially took the medicine off the table as an option for breast cancer patients. Avastin has shown to extend the life of metastatic breast cancer patients for months, and for those battling terminal cancer, every

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additional day that they can beat the disease and extend their time with their loved ones is valuable and treasured.

I'll continue working on these and other issues to make sure that women battling breast cancer aren't denied access to life-saving screenings or treatment that may extend their lives and their time with loved ones. And you can do your part by encouraging your family, friends and neighbors to get early detection and preventive screenings.

I am interested in hearing your thoughts on how we can help more Louisiana families with the issues important to you.

Please contact me with your ideas at any of my state offices or in my Washington office. You can also reach me online at <http://vitter.senate.gov>.

David Vitter serves Louisiana in the U.S. Senate.