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Senate Budget Proposal Threatens Critical Cancer Screening Funding

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. – February 5, 2016 – After the state invested a record \$2.1 million into the Mary Brogan Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program last year, the Florida Senate is proposing a significant cut in funding for the program. The program provides lifesaving cancer screenings to medically underserved women between the ages of 50 and 64 whose incomes are below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.

“Providing women the opportunity to detect cancer early when it is most survivable is something that everyone deserves, no matter who they are or where they live, said Heather Youmans, government relations director for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN). “The Senate President supported this program in the past and it’s critically important that he work with the Speaker of the House to ensure more women have access to it, not less.”

While the House budget includes \$2.1 million for the program, the Senate budget includes just \$600,000. The program was not included in the Governor’s budget released in December.

Since the program first received state money in fiscal year 2013, more than 30,000 women have been screened through the program. Even at current funding levels, however, the program only has enough money to screen about 5 percent of eligible women in the state.

“This program has been a lifesaver for hundreds of women in Florida because it provides access to evidenced-based screenings, which are the most important tools for detecting breast and cervical cancer early and improving survival rates,” said Youmans.

Florida ranks 3rd in the United States in the number of new breast cancer cases per year and 2nd in the number of deaths. An estimated 16,770 Florida women will receive a breast cancer diagnosis and an estimated 2,880 are expected to die from the disease in 2016.

ABOUT ACS CAN

ACS CAN, the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. ACS CAN works to encourage elected officials and candidates to make cancer a top national priority. ACS CAN gives ordinary people extraordinary power to fight cancer with the training and tools they need to make their voices heard. For more information, visit <http://www.acscan.org/>.

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