



Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee

Thursday, February 8, 2007

SB 198

Creating a Breast Cancer Research and Outreach License Plate

Testimony In Favor Offered by the University of Kansas Medical Center

Conferee: Roy Jensen, MD; Director, KU Cancer Center

Testimony

Madam Chairperson and members of the Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation, my name is Dr. Roy Jensen, and I am the Director of the University of Kansas Cancer Center. I am testifying today in support of Senate Bill 198.

Senate Bill 198 establishes a personalized license plate to support breast cancer research and outreach. This license plate, which is the brainchild of Senator Barbara Allen, is another example of her commitment to helping women in the State of Kansas more effectively fight breast cancer. She knows all too well what a breast cancer diagnosis feels like and what it takes to fight this disease. We are lucky to have such a dedicated State Senator driving the efforts to eradicate breast cancer in our state.

In addition to Senator Allen's efforts to establish a Breast Cancer Check-off Program, I am confident that this new personalized license plate will help:

- Raise awareness of breast cancer among Kansas women;
- Increase the funding for research conducted by breast cancer researchers at the University of Kansas Cancer Center; and
- Support breast cancer education, screening, and early detection outreach activities provided by the Midwest Cancer Alliance.

For women, breast cancer ranks second among cancer deaths behind lung cancer. According to estimates by the American Cancer Society, 1,750 Kansas women will be diagnosed with breast cancer and 340 will die this year. The good news is that we are making head way in the fight against breast cancer nationally and in Kansas — mortality rates have stabilized nationally and are declining. However, we still have a long way to go in our efforts to prevent breast cancer and detect it early enough to improve the effectiveness of treatments. It is unacceptable that 1,750 Kansas women will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year — **we can do better.**

At the University of Kansas Cancer Center, we plan to do better in the area of breast cancer research by engaging in new research efforts and collaborations. We have a great team of nationally-recognized breast cancer researchers that are making significant headway against this disease. In the area of breast cancer prevention, Dr. Carol Fabian is one of the nation's top researchers and clinicians. In my own laboratory, my research team is developing a better understanding of the hereditary genes that cause and prevent breast cancer. We recently joined forces with OncImmune, a company from the United Kingdom with its North American headquarters in Lenexa, KS, which has a biomarker technology that can detect breast cancer four years earlier than mammograms. The funds generated by the Breast Cancer Research and Outreach License Plate will help to further our efforts to develop more effective ways to diagnose, treat, and prevent breast cancer.

I am particularly pleased that Senate Bill 198 includes support for the efforts of the newly forming Midwest Cancer Alliance (MCA). The MCA is envisioned as a statewide network of oncologists and cancer support professionals. Specifically, the MCA will focus on optimizing cancer prevention, screening, and care for citizens across Kansas through a community-based approach. The MCA will help community oncologists provide more comprehensive cancer care locally, which will improve cancer survival rates and reduce travel time and costs for cancer patients.

With funding support from the Breast Cancer Research and Outreach License Plate, the MCA also will be able to do better by ensuring that breast cancer patients in communities across Kansas are aware of what prevention and early detection protocols, treatment choices, and clinical studies are available to them. Providing funding for a statewide coordinator to assist our statewide medical director, Dr. Gary Doolittle, will help the Midwest Cancer Alliance advance cancer care, detection, and prevention strategies for Kansans close to home.

Again, I want to express my gratitude to Senator Allen and her colleagues in the Senate for supporting the creation of the Breast Cancer Research and Outreach License Plate. As someone who has spent the majority of his career focused on finding a cure for breast cancer, I appreciate every effort to help fund research and outreach in this arena. In Kansas, we can make a difference in the fight against breast cancer.

I look forward to applying for my Breast Cancer Research and Outreach License plate on January 1, 2008. Thank you for your time today. I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

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