



**U.S. Representative  
Debbie Wasserman Schultz:  
Report on**

# The EARLY Act

Dear Friend:

As you may know, I've worked to improve our nation's approach to breast cancer during my entire career in public service. But recently the issue took on added significance in my life. A little over a year ago, I found a lump in my breast while doing a routine self-exam. I was diagnosed with breast cancer.

This disease knows no boundaries, including age. Young women can and do get breast cancer and the result can be devastating. Their breast cancers are generally more aggressive, are diagnosed at a later stage, and result in lower survival rates.

In response, I've introduced the Education and Awareness Requires Learning Young Act, or EARLY Act (H.R. 1740), to raise awareness of the threat breast cancer poses to young women of all racial, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, including heightened risks among certain groups.

This mailing tells you more about breast cancer in young women and the legislation designed to help them. We need to ensure that every young woman in America can rely on more than luck. Their survival depends on it. I believe the EARLY Act will be a big help.



*Debbie*

Rep. Wasserman Schultz met with members of the Florida Breast Cancer Coalition this May to discuss their support for the EARLY Act and other breast cancer legislation.

## Breast Cancer Resources

If you have questions about cancer, you can call: 1-800-4-CANCER or visit <http://www.cancer.gov>

Links to breast cancer resources can be found on my Web site at: <http://wassermanschultz.house.gov/EARLYACT>

To get more answers to your questions about breast cancer, you can chat live with a representative from the National Cancer Institute. Go to: <http://cancer.gov/livehelp> or use the link on my Web site.

For information on breast self-exams, visit: <http://www.womenshealth.gov/faq/breast-self-exam.cfm>

# What Can We Do To Help Young Women?

In March, I introduced the EARLY Act (H.R. 1740), which directs the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to bring together a panel of experts to develop a national education campaign aimed at young women and medical providers, using evidence-based research. The legislation also provides assistance to organizations that support young women and help them deal with the unique challenges of being diagnosed with breast cancer early in life.

The EARLY Act empowers young women to:

1. **LEARN** the facts.
2. **KNOW** their bodies.
3. **SPEAK** up for their health.
4. **EMBRACE** support.

## LEARN THE FACTS

- Young women **can** and **do** get breast cancer.
- In 2008, the American Cancer Society projected 182,460 new cases of breast cancer in females – it was estimated that **28,000 of these women would be less than 45 years of age.**
- Although the incidence of young women with breast cancer is much lower than in older women, young women's breast cancers are generally **more aggressive** and result in **lower survival rates.**
- Certain ethnicities – including **Ashkenazi Jews**, and **African American** young women under the age of 40 – have an increased risk of breast cancer.
- Ashkenazi Jewish women are more likely to have a mutation in the **BRCA1** or **BRCA2** gene. Women with an altered BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene are 3 to 7 times more likely to develop breast cancer than women without alterations in those genes.
- Women with an altered BRCA1 or BRCA2 gene also often develop breast cancer at a young age (before age 50).
- African American women have a **higher incidence rate** of breast cancer before age 40 than Caucasian women.
- African American women of all ages have a **higher mortality rate** from breast cancer than Caucasian women.
- African American women under 35 are more likely to have basal-like type breast cancer, which is a **more aggressive** form of breast cancer.



## KNOW YOUR BODY

- The EARLY Act encourages women to be familiar with the look and feel of their breasts.
- By knowing what feels normal, a young woman has a better chance of knowing when something feels different.
- The EARLY Act also works to educate young women about changes in their body that could be warning signs of breast cancer – we want them to know that it doesn't only start with a lump. It can be swelling, a rash, breast pain, nipple pain, redness or scaliness too.



## SPEAK UP FOR YOUR HEALTH

- The EARLY Act encourages young women to be their own voice, speak up for themselves, and know when they need to go to the doctor.
- It arms them with the confidence to stand up to anyone who tells them “you are too young for breast cancer.”
- The EARLY Act also lets young women know that genetic counseling is available to them, and encourages them to inquire about these tests with their doctors.

## EMBRACE SUPPORT

- The EARLY Act provides grants to organizations dedicated to supporting young women diagnosed with breast cancer.



Rep. Wasserman Schultz is joined by Staci Slingbaum, a local breast cancer patient in her early 30s, in front of a mobile mammography clinic van at Memorial Breast Cancer Center in Pembroke Pines.

Rep. Wasserman Schultz announced that she was seeking federal funds to provide comprehensive screening, evaluation, diagnosis and treatment to more women in South Broward and North Dade.

Official Business

This mailing was prepared, published and mailed at taxpayer expense.



<http://wassermanschultz.house.gov>

## What Is The Need For The EARLY Act?

*Early detection can save lives.*

Early detection does not receive enough emphasis in health care for the young adult population.

Young women diagnosed with breast cancer face unique challenges:



- **Body Image:** After breast cancer related surgery, young women face the challenge of embracing their new bodies.
- **Relationships and Dating:** Intimacy issues as well as the increased stress on a relationship.
- **Career:** Young women are often in the midst of beginning and building up their careers. Being diagnosed with breast cancer can interfere with day to day success at work and chance of promotion.
- **Fertility:** Breast cancer treatment may prevent a young woman from having any children.
- **Financial Challenges:** Breast cancer can dramatically impact a woman's financial stability. Young women at the beginning of their careers are generally less well off and less likely to be insured.

Although the incidence of breast cancer in young women is much lower than that of older women, young women do get breast cancer, and should be educated and aware of their risk. I am working to give them the support they need.

### Contact my offices:

**Pembroke Pines Office**  
10100 Pines Blvd.  
Pembroke Pines, FL 33026  
Phone: 954-437-3936  
Fax: 954-437-4776

**Aventura Office**  
19200 West Country Club Drive  
3rd Floor  
Aventura, FL 33180  
Phone: 305-936-5724  
Fax: 305-932-9664

**Washington, DC Office**  
118 Cannon H.O.B.  
Washington, DC 20515  
Phone: 202-225-7931  
Fax: 202-226-2052