



## NBCC Advocate Toolkit

### 2025 Congressional Recesses

Congressional recesses are a critical time for advocacy as well as an important opportunity to build on recent momentum toward achieving our NBCC priorities. During the whole month of August and at multiple times throughout the year, members of Congress will be home in their states and districts to hear from constituents, and it is time for us to weigh in. Members of Congress are more likely to be hosting town halls, participating in constituent-facing events, and engaging on social media. Recess time also provides a unique opportunity to engage local advocates who normally do not travel to NBCC in-person lobby days, as well as to build your local network of breast cancer advocates!

**Here are some ways to engage your members of Congress during their recess:**

- a. **Meet the member in their district office(s).** If you need help finding district office staff information, contact Maggie Bush ([mbush@stopbreastcancer.org](mailto:mbush@stopbreastcancer.org)). All current cosponsor lists and target lists are kept up to date on the [Team Leader Resource Page](#).*
- b. **Speak up at a Town Hall event.** Many members hold public events during their recess. Pull together a group of local NBCC advocates to attend these event(s) and speak up about NBCC priorities – including asking key members to cosponsor the MBCACA and support the DOD Breast Cancer Research Program.*
- c. **Alert the media to increase public pressure.** Utilize the resources below to alert local media outlets to NBCC's work in the 119<sup>th</sup> Congress.*
- d. **Spread the word on social media.** Help build visibility for breast cancer advocacy by bringing our message to Twitter, Instagram and Facebook! See our tools below.*

### In This Toolkit

#### District Office Meeting Resources

- **The list of current MBCACA cosponsors, DOD BCRP supporters, and legislators to target,** are kept current on the Team Leader Resource Page: <https://www.stopbreastcancer.org/nbcc-team-leader-resource-page/>
- Sample meeting request sample
- Updated talking points: what Congress needs to hear from NBCC
- Sample Blurb to Request Members to Place in Newsletters



- Following any meeting with congressional staff, [please be sure to fill out our post-meeting report](#) and let us know if you need assistance with immediate action steps or questions that arose during your meeting!

### **Town Hall Meetings**

- Sample volunteer announcement: encourage local advocates to attend events!
- Sample questions to ask members of Congress at town hall meetings
- Visit Indivisible.org or Mobilize.org to find town hall and other events engaging lawmakers in your area.

**Media & Social Media Tools** – follow our social media channels to share, repost and reuse our timely language on key priority issues. See media tips toward the end of this document.

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### **District Office Meeting Resources**

#### **Sample Meeting Request:**

*Customize this email message including the relevant representative name, any existing relationship you have, and their status as a current or hopeful cosponsor of the MBCACA bill or the DOD BCRP. Let Maggie know if you need help! ([mbush@stopbreastcancer.org](mailto:mbush@stopbreastcancer.org))*

Dear [STAFF NAME],

[I've met with you before, I look forward to building a relationship, I have a connection to the office, etc. - whatever is applicable]. I am writing to request a meeting with Rep/Sen [NAME] or you when you are home in the district [preferred dates].

As a regional leader with the National Breast Cancer Coalition and constituent/resident of STATE/DISTRICT, I would like to [ask Rep/Sen X to consider supporting/thank REP/SEN NAME for his/her past support of] the Metastatic Breast Cancer Access to Care Act, which has already garnered significant bipartisan support in the 119th Congress. We would love to discuss how REP/ SEN NAME can help ensure the passage of the legislation this year.

We would also like to discuss Rep.Sen X's potential to support the DOD Breast Cancer Research Program, an innovative and unique research program that has produced lifesaving medical therapies. The outcomes of the DOD BCRP ultimately benefit active-duty Service members, Veterans and their families, and the public.

I am available for an in-district meeting [DATES] and would welcome a meeting to discuss NBCC's public policy priorities at any time convenient to you. Thank you!



Best, [Your info]

### **Updated Congressional Meeting Talking Points:**

#### **DOD Breast Cancer Research Program for FY26**

- The DOD BCRP has established itself worldwide and across the nation as a model medical research program. It is known for being innovative and unique and has produced lifesaving medical therapies. The outcomes of the DOD BCRP ultimately benefit active-duty Service members, Veterans and their families, and the public.
- This life saving program must continue, and your support for the program is vital to its success. By signing this letter you are letting the general public and your constituents, in addition to your colleagues, know that you are part of the historic strong bipartisan support for the DOD BCRP. We must show that support each and every year.[IF PAST SIGNER; We thank Rep X for his/her support of this program last year and] We urge Rep X to support the program again this year.

#### **Enact the Metastatic Breast Cancer Access to Care Act (HR 2048 (Garbarino (R-NY)/Castor (D-FL))**

- Metastatic breast cancer is cancer that has spread from the breast to the bones, lungs, or other distant parts of the body. 90% of breast cancer deaths are a result of metastatic disease. There is no cure.
- Under current law, eligible individuals with metastatic breast cancer are subject to a five-month waiting period for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and a twenty-four-month waiting period for Medicare coverage.
- The Metastatic Breast Cancer Access to Care Act would waive all waiting periods for Medicare and SSDI for individuals under 65 and diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer who already qualify for the benefits. Based on the limited life expectancy of individuals with metastatic disease, an average of 3 years, there is no time to wait for these benefits.

(1) For Members who have cosponsored the Metastatic Breast Cancer Access to Care Act: Thank you for cosponsoring this legislation. Is there something you can do to help us get additional Members of Congress to sign on? Some examples include getting others from your state delegation to cosponsor, getting others on your Committee to cosponsor, and/or getting support from Members of a Congressional Caucus to which you belong. What do you think is



the best way for us to pass this legislation in this Congress? How can you help us get the bill passed?

(2) For Members who have not cosponsored: Will you cosponsor the Metastatic Breast Cancer Access to Care Act? If not, why not? Is there additional information we could provide you to get your support?

### **Sample Blurb to Request Members to Place in Newsletters**

*Some NBCC advocates have successfully encouraged members of Congress to highlight the MBCACA in their constituent newsletters. Customize this blurb and ask them to call attention to the bill:*

### **H.R. 2048, Metastatic Breast Cancer Access to Care Act**

Cancer is the leading cause of death in [state], and one in eight women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime. Too many individuals with this disease die waiting for their benefits. SSDI and Medicare benefits are critically important in helping to ease that financial burden for these individuals and their families. That's why I'm a proud cosponsor of the bipartisan Metastatic Breast Cancer Access to Care Act, which would eliminate waiting times for Medicare and Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) for patients with metastatic breast cancer and help ease the burden for families in our district.

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### **Town Hall Meetings**

#### **Sample volunteer announcement: encourage local advocates to attend events**

Dear friends,

As you may know, Congress will soon begin their recess and will be home in [STATE] to meet with constituents. Now is a critical time for us to engage with our elected officials and ask them to support breast cancer advocacy and specifically the legislative priorities of the National Breast Cancer Coalition. Please join me at [DATE, time, Location] for Representative XX's Town Hall/other event] and help spread the word about our important work to end breast cancer.

*[Additional details and meet-up information, including who from your group will take the lead on asking questions if allowed]. Be sure to ask succinct and specific questions if you have the opportunity!*



Sincerely, [Your INFO]

### **Sample questions to ask members of Congress at town hall meetings**

(Tip: ensure your group is clear on who will be asking questions on behalf of NBCC; this should be a Team Leader!)

1. Thank you for supporting efforts to end breast cancer, [including your public support for level funding for the DOD BCRP]. How can we continue to build support for these critical issues in the current Congress?
2. On behalf of the National Breast Cancer Coalition, we ask you to please cosponsor the Metastatic Breast Cancer Access to Care Act, which would waive the arbitrary waiting period for individuals under 65 and diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer who already qualify for the benefits. People are dying and families are devastated while waiting for benefits they already qualify for; can you support our work to right this wrong?

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### **Media relations tips:**

**Customize your press release:** Using the provided template, plug in your local details. Be sure to highlight any newsworthy items—did your meeting result in concrete action? Has a local official weighed in?

**Research and identify your targets:** Which publications and reporters in your area are most likely to cover this story? Before reaching out, it's crucial to understand the kinds of topics your targets cover and how they cover them. Read, watch, and listen to make sure you're pitching the right people.

**Tip:** Think hyperlocal. A community channel is more likely to cover your meeting than a major metropolitan newspaper, program, or website. Community news networks like [Patch](#) could be a good place to start.

**Pitch your story:** If you've identified a specific reporter or writer you'd like to contact, email them directly. You can usually find contact info in staff bios on outlet websites, under bylines, and/or on public social media accounts.



Not sure whom to contact? Most publications' websites will have a "Contact Us" option, usually in the "About Section." If there's an email address or a form to submit tips, try that.

To avoid getting stuck in a spam filter, do not include a file attachment in your initial email. Instead, paste the press release text into the body of the email.

**Tip:** Include a personal note to add interest and context.

**Example:** "Hi [name] – I really enjoyed your recent column on a local cancer charity, and I thought you might be interested in learning about another effort to end cancer in our community. As an advocate with the National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC), I'm spending Congress's recess encouraging [our rep] to support NBCC's priorities... [add any other relevant details] ... Please get in touch if you'd like to learn more. My contact details are below.

**Follow up:** If you haven't heard back within a week, it's okay to follow up. Reporters get a lot of emails!

In your email client, go to your sent folder, find the original email, and forward it to the recipient with a note acknowledging that they're probably very busy, but that you wanted to make sure they saw this. You can also ask if someone else at their outlet is better suited for the content. Thank them again, and if you don't hear back, assume they're not interested at this time. But unless they tell you otherwise, you can reach out again in the future with a new story or press release.

**Tip:** Most reporters do not want to be contacted via phone, but if they are active on public social media, you can try to connect with them there.

**Questions? Contact Nicole at [nlevins@stopbreastcancer.org](mailto:nlevins@stopbreastcancer.org).**