Updates from the 2014 San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium

The San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium is held each year in early December. This annual event typically attracts an international audience of over 7,000 attendees including physicians, researchers and patient advocates. I attended the 2014 Symposium as a patient advocate representing VBCF. Here are some highlights of the research that was presented.

Hormone Receptor-Positive Breast Cancer

The SOFT clinical trial evaluated whether there is benefit in adding ovarian suppression to anti-hormone treatment for premenopausal women with early-stage breast cancer. The results of this randomized, phase III clinical trial were presented as well as published in the New England Journal of Medicine. Some of the patients in the trial had received chemotherapy after breast cancer surgery while others had not. Those not receiving chemotherapy were considered to be at very low risk of recurrence.

The SOFT trial found that, for women who had received chemotherapy, treatment with tamoxifen along with ovarian suppression reduced the relative risk of breast cancer recurrence by 22% compared to treatment with tamoxifen alone. The study also found that, for women who had received chemotherapy, treatment with the aromatase inhibitor exemestane (Aromasin) along with ovarian suppression reduced the relative risk of breast cancer recurrence by 35% compared to treatment with tamoxifen alone.

Immune System Therapies

Treatments that help the immune system to more effectively fight off cancer are already being used to treat some types of cancer, particularly melanoma. One of the studies presented gave early indications that a particular type of immune system therapy has potential for breast cancer treatment. The study was a small clinical trial of a drug called pembrolizumab, also known as Keytruda, which has already received approval from the Food and Drug Administration for the treatment of melanoma. This drug works by blocking cellular processes that interfere with the immune system. In this small study of patients with advanced triple negative breast cancer, several of the patients had their tumors shrink, and others had their disease stabilize. The results were considered encouraging enough to take this treatment forward for further study in larger clinical trials. Continued on Page 6.
The Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation had another successful year. VBCF made substantial updates and additions to our print and online educational materials including the addition of clinical trials information, state-based resources for newly diagnosed including local support groups, breast cancer navigators and lifestyle resource contacts. We awarded mini-grants totaling nearly $6,200 to seven non-profit organizations in Virginia. These funds were used for breast health education, and grantees estimated that more than 10,000 Virginians were served. We also secured Better Business Bureau (BBB) Central Virginia accreditation, ensuring that VBCF meets the BBB’s 20 standards of charity accountability, a set of nationally-recognized best practices in governance, measuring effectiveness, finance, and fundraising.

It is the commitment of the staff and Board of Directors to continue the momentum of 2014. We are taking a strong look at our commitment to Virginians and how we can continue to add value to those affected by breast cancer. This means creating a 36 month strategic plan that will increase our community impact. A strategic plan will provide us with a clear roadmap for organizational programming. By outlining measurable goals and steps to achieve those goals, VBCF can be as effective and efficient as possible to further our mission’s reach.

As part of this process, we will assess our prior accomplishments, identify areas of improvement, and make changes to our organizational structure to increase efficiency and effectiveness. There will be conversations with stakeholders, board members, and community leaders. We will identify major areas of strategic focus that are paramount to the success of the organization. Each area of focus will be managed by a committee, led by a board member serving as its chair, and charged with developing the programming necessary to meet the goals outlined in the Plan. We are looking to increase efforts in education, advocacy, marketing, and fundraising and honoring the events that have spread our mission.

VBCF has dedicated the past 23 years to help eradicate breast cancer. Our promise to Virginians remains steadfast. VBCF understands the importance of this promise. Every Board of Directors meeting begins with a moment of silence to honor those just diagnosed with breast cancer, those currently in treatment, and those who lost their fight. VBCF is more than a non-profit organization. It is a 23 year promise that refuses to stop educating, advocating, and fighting to eradicate this disease.

Join our mission. Your voice, donation, and time can make a difference!
**Advocacy Update**

VBCF wishes Vernal Branch, former public policy manager, all the best in her semi-retirement, effective January 1, 2015. Vernal has made a positive impact on breast cancer policy for more than 20 years at the national and state levels, and we hope she enjoys this new phase of her life!

Becky Bowers-Lanier of B2L Consulting has been working with VBCF since last summer, and in 2015, will monitor state policy issues. VBCF plans to use 2015 to determine the best strategic investment of our resources for our future advocacy activities. As there is no proposed breast cancer specific legislation in the VA General Assembly at this time, VBCF is not planning to host a state breast cancer lobby day this year but rather is partnering in related coalition initiatives and legislation, including:

Fair Copay VA is a patient-focused campaign dedicated to ensuring that Virginians who have paid their insurance premiums are able to access the medical treatments they need when they or someone in their family gets sick. Led by Patient Services, Inc., VBCF and other organizations are supportive of a legislative solution to limit out-of-pocket costs for vital medications. Insurers are increasingly moving medications to so-called specialty tier price categories, which require patients to pay a percentage of the total cost of their drugs, rather than a manageable and fixed copay. This can result in hundreds or even thousands of dollars per month in additional out-of-pocket costs for even a single medication. To learn more, visit [www.faircopayva.org](http://www.faircopayva.org).

Healthcare for All Virginians (HAV) Coalition is a group of more than 100 including VBCF which have come together to advocate for affordable, quality health care for Virginians without health insurance. This year’s focus is on encouraging the state’s legislators to close the coverage gap, allowing Virginians to receive annual recommended cancer screenings regardless of their ability to pay. To learn more, visit [www.havcoalition.org](http://www.havcoalition.org).

Additional Assembly legislation which VBCF is monitoring:

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<th>Bill</th>
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>HB 1339</td>
<td>Ware</td>
<td>Health benefit exchange; information on health benefit plans.</td>
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<td>HB 1436</td>
<td>O'Bannon</td>
<td>Dispensing of interchangeable biosimilars; sunset provision.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HB 1499</td>
<td>Albo</td>
<td>Breast-feeding in public places; mother’s right</td>
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<th>Bill</th>
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<tr>
<td>HB 1539</td>
<td>Albo</td>
<td>Virginia Translational Medicine Investment Fund; established.</td>
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<td>HB 1942</td>
<td>Habeeb</td>
<td>Health insurance; prior authorization for drug benefits.</td>
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<td>HB 1948</td>
<td>McClellan</td>
<td>Prescription drugs; specialty tier coverage.</td>
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<td>HB 2050</td>
<td>Sickles</td>
<td>Expanded access to investigational drugs, biological products, and devices.</td>
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<td>HB 2151</td>
<td>Yancey</td>
<td>Employment; break to express breast milk.</td>
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<td>HB 2254</td>
<td>McQuinn</td>
<td>Virginia Human Rights Act; pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, cause of action.</td>
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<td>HB 2264</td>
<td>Lingamfelter</td>
<td>Workers’ compensation; presumption of compensability for certain diseases.</td>
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<td>HB 2322</td>
<td>Stolle</td>
<td>Health benefit plans; essential health benefits waiver.</td>
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<td>SB 395</td>
<td>Vogel</td>
<td>Personal action for injury to person; malpractice against health care provider, failure to report.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SB 732</td>
<td>Stanley</td>
<td>Investigational drugs; expanded access.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SB 1149</td>
<td>Stuart</td>
<td>Expanded access to investigational drugs, biological products, and devices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SB 1222</td>
<td>Reeves</td>
<td>Expanded access to investigational drugs, biological products, and devices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SB 1262</td>
<td>Newman</td>
<td>Health insurance plans and programs; preauthorization for drug benefits.</td>
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<td>SB 1394</td>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>Prescription drugs; specialty tier coverage.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SB 1427</td>
<td>Wexton</td>
<td>Right to breastfeed in public places.</td>
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Visit [www.lis.virginia.gov](http://www.lis.virginia.gov) to learn more about these bills.
Let Your Voice Be Heard!

Mark your calendar now to join breast cancer advocates on Tuesday, May 5, 2015 in Washington, DC. Annually in May, VBCF provides training, transportation, and refreshments to attendees from across Virginia to participate in National Lobby Day, hosted by the National Breast Cancer Coalition. Participants meet with our state’s legislators to improve breast cancer public policies. VBCF asks you to show up and be counted!

2015 National Legislative Priorities

PRIORITY #1 — Accelerating the End of Breast Cancer Act: Breast Cancer Deadline 2020® is a call to action for all stakeholders to focus efforts on knowing how to end the disease by the end of the decade.

PRIORITY #2 — $150 Million for the Department of Defense (DOD) Breast Cancer Research Program (BCRP) an innovative, unique, and efficient medical research model which has proven to be accountable to the public and has produced extraordinary results.

PRIORITY #3 — Guaranteed Access to Quality Care for All: Ensuring access to quality, evidence-based health care for individuals with, and at risk of, breast cancer and protecting vital programs, such as the Medicaid Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Program (Medicaid BCCTP).

PRIORITY #4 — Ensuring the Participation of Educated Patient Advocates in all Levels of Health Care Decision Making: allowing educated patient advocates to have a seat at the table in all levels of health care decision making which affects their lives.

If you are interested in learning more about National Lobby Day, please visit www.vbcf.org/advocate/national-lobby-day or contact Katy Sawyer at 800-345-8223, ext. 201.

Want to receive the VBCF Connection, our monthly e-newsletter? Visit www.vbcf.org to sign up!

Sharon H. Kohlenberg Healthcare Service Award

The Sharon H. Kohlenberg Healthcare Service award recognizes an individual or group practicing in Virginia in the healthcare service field who exhibits a deep and abiding commitment to the fight against breast cancer. Honoring Sherry Kohlenberg, the award is extended annually to a practitioner who goes above and beyond the normal expectations of his or her job.

VBCF received nominations for this award in August 2014, and after reviewing many qualified candidates, we are proud to announce Elizabeth Jo Lamb, RT(R)(M) as the 2014 recipient.

Ms. Lamb is the Manager of Diagnostic Imaging at Bath Community Hospital, where she has worked for over 20 years. Ms. Lamb was nominated for this award because of her commitment and follow through in bringing breast cancer screening to individuals in her community who are often uninsured or under insured. She has formed partnerships with local organizations, including Every Women’s Life, to ensure that everyone in her rural community in western Virginia has a fair chance at getting the care they need. Ms. Lamb is described as “selfless” in ensuring that barriers to receiving mammograms are removed for all and “tireless” in pursuing breast health for all women in her community. She also has provided leadership in bringing better resources and technology, including digital mammography, to her hospital. She has been active in a large local health fair which offers free mammograms to uninsured women.

VBCF is proud to extend our 2014 award to Elizabeth Jo Lamb because of her commitment to serving all Virginians, especially those with economic barriers to health care. Congratulations!
2014 was another big year for VBCF! Thanks to the help of individuals like you, VBCF has continued to make a difference in the lives of Virginians impacted by breast cancer. Your support made 2014 a productive year for VBCF. Here are some highlights:

Distributed over 143,000 free pink ribbons and breast health basics brochures through our Breast Cancer is More Than a Pink Ribbon Campaign. Pink ribbons are attached to bilingual education cards with prevalence rates, detection tool information, and Every Woman’s Life contact information.

Awarded a total of $1,300 to six library systems representing 18 branches. Funds are used for the purchase of breast cancer books and resources for local library patrons. Since 2000, VBCF and its chapters have provided more than $55,000 in grant funds to support local libraries across VA through our Library Outreach Program.

Expanded our Mini-Grant Program in 2014, awarding nearly $6,200 to seven non-profit organizations – Chickahominy Health District Every Woman’s Life Program, CrossOver Healthcare Ministry, Ellen Shaw de Paredes Breast Cancer Foundation, Greater Prince William Community Health Center, Nueva Vida, Pathways Specialty Clinic, and Richmond Guardian Angels. These grantees provided breast health education services in local communities across the state. Grantees estimate more than 10,000 Virginians were served.

Partnered with the Central Virginia Breast Cancer Coalition and other local cancer organizations to host the 3rd Annual Survivorship Journey: A Conference for Cancer Survivors and Their Caregivers. This free conference held at Lewis Ginter Botanical Garden in Richmond was attended by 155 participants.

Coordinated the statewide Breast Cancer Lobby Day at the Virginia General Assembly in partnership with the American Cancer Society, Nueva Vida, Sisters Network, and Susan G. Komen Central Virginia Affiliate.

Led a group of advocates to meet with our congressional legislators in partnership with the National Breast Cancer Coalition’s National Lobby Day in Washington, D.C.

Taught hundreds of people during 22 classes at the Becky’s Place educational tent at the Remote Area Medical program in Wise, VA. Over a three-day period VBCF volunteers, made up of cancer survivors, nurses, and pharmacy students taught classes on breast, ovarian, cervical, and male cancers in addition to providing smoking cessation and diabetes education.

VBCF Welcomes Our Newest Board Member

Clifford L. Deal III, MD, FACS

Clifford L. Deal III, MD, FACS, is a surgeon with Richmond Surgical specializing in breast cancer surgery. He has served as Chairman of the Department of Surgery at Henrico Doctors’ Hospital and is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Surgery in the Division of Trauma and Critical Care Surgery at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Dr. Deal is a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Army Reserve as a Staff Surgeon with the 946th Forward Surgical Team, and he saw action in the first Gulf War and Afghanistan. He is a member of the American Society of Breast Surgeons, American Medical Association and is a Fellow with the American College of Surgeons and currently serves on the Board of Directors of both the Richmond Academy of Medicine and the Medical Society of Virginia. He received his undergraduate degree from Washington and Lee University and his medical degree from VCU’s Medical College of Virginia (MCV). He completed his general surgery residency at MCV. Dr. Deal is married to Dr. Tracey Deal, a pediatrician, and they have two children.

Join us on Facebook!
www.facebook.com/virginiabreastcancerfoundation

You may qualify for a free mammogram and pap test through the Every Woman's Life Program.

Call to see if you qualify!

866-EWL-4YOU
Targeted Treatments

Inherited genetic mutations such as the BRCA1 and BRCA2 mutations increase the risk of developing breast and ovarian cancers, but these mutations are present in only 5-10% of cancer cases. The Cancer Genome Atlas project identified more than 100 different non-inherited mutations that occur in breast cancer. A fairly small number of these mutations are very common. It is possible now to sequence any individual patient’s tumor cells to determine which mutations are present. This information may be used in various ways.

One way that the information is used is to match patients with clinical trials studying experimental therapies that are targeted to specific mutations. Another way could be to rule out treatments that are unlikely to work for a particular patient. For example, researchers presented a study which sought to find out whether there was a set of genetic changes that could predict how well patients did when they received the anti-estrogen therapy fulvestrant. This study (TransCONFIRM) found that a 37-gene signature could potentially be used to identify those metastatic breast cancer patients for whom treatment with fulvestrant is or is not likely to be beneficial. More research will be needed to confirm these findings.

Overall, this year’s Symposium provided some interesting indications of where breast cancer research may be headed. We should expect to hear much more in the future about new treatments that harness the immune system as well as new drugs and drug combinations that are more personalized based on the specific biological characteristics of a patient’s tumor cells.

Strawberry-Banana Smoothie

INGREDIENTS:
- 1 cup vanilla greek yogurt
- 1 medium banana*
- 1 cup frozen strawberries
- 1/2 tsp vanilla
- 1 tbsp honey
- 2 cups ice

*Tip: Slice and freeze ripe bananas ahead of time for a creamier smoothie.

DIRECTIONS:
Put all of your smoothie ingredients in a blender and blend until nice and smooth! Pour into glasses and enjoy!
Makes 2 servings.

Thank You for Your Service!

Thank you to our 2014 retiring Board of Directors members, Yvonne Eisenberg of Fishersville and Don Geisler of Chester, for their service and leadership to VBCF. Both have been dedicated breast cancer activists. Yvonne, and her co-chair Maggie Powers, have been organizing and leading Becky’s Place at the Remote Area Medical Program in Wise County, VA for a number of years. Yvonne plans to continue her leadership of this health education project. She was also recognized with the Karin Decker Noss Scholarship in 2014 and is attending conferences in medical research and legislative advocacy over the next two years to bring this knowledge back to fellow Virginians. Don and his wife Barbara, a breast cancer survivor, are a couple of VBCF’s super volunteers who are always ready, willing and able to pitch in with community health fairs, tabling events, and more to help educate Virginians about breast cancer. VBCF will miss Yvonne and Don’s leadership but know that they will continue to make a difference in the breast cancer field as well as enjoying their additional free time.
Announcements

VBCF is Awarding $5,000 to a Deserving Breast Cancer Advocate!

Are you passionate about ending breast cancer? Do you have a desire to learn about the science of breast cancer? The Karin Decker Noss Scholarship was created to honor the memory of Karin Decker Noss, a dedicated board member and past president of VBCF. The scholarship funds training in medical research and legislative advocacy to carry on the work that Karin began. Visit www.vbcf.org/karin-decker-noss-scholarship to learn more and apply. The application will be available by February 28, and the deadline to apply is March 31, 2015.

Volunteer Opportunity!

Each year, VBCF distributes approximately 100,000 free pink ribbon education cards to raise awareness of breast cancer. Each pink ribbon is attached to a bilingual English/Spanish information card that contains basic breast health information.

We need volunteers to help us attach the pink ribbons to the information cards and place them in packages of 100 for distribution. The ribbons are already cut and pinned. This is a great project for a student (or other) group! It can be done in VBCF’s Richmond office or at an off-site location in the Richmond area. Please contact jennie@vbcf.org or 800-345-8223 ext. 204 if you are interested in volunteering.

Donations needed for Becky’s Place at RAM

VBCF will once again participate in RAM (Remote Area Medical) to be held July 17-19, 2015 in Wise, VA. This event brings health care screening, services and education to Wise County, in rural far southwestern Virginia. VBCF hosts the education program tent at RAM.

The 2015 RAM wish list items are monetary donations in any amount (please indicate that your gift is for Becky’s Place in the comment field) and Gift Cards to Wal-Mart, Kmart, Food City or Food Lion ($10, $25 or $50 increments please). Donations may be mailed to VBCF at 5004 Monument Avenue, Suite 102, Richmond, VA 23230. Gift card donations for 2015 will be accepted until July 9, 2015 and monetary donations through July 16, 2015. Contact Jaime Strohhacker at jaime@vbcf.org or by phone at 1-800-345-8223 ext. 202 for additional information.

Telemarketers Calling?

VBCF has recently been made aware of Virginians receiving telemarketing calls soliciting donations for breast cancer charities with callers suggesting they are affiliated with VBCF.

VBCF does not, under any circumstances, employ telemarketers to raise money, despite sometimes being confused with other organizations that do. There are a number of other sound-alike organizations. The Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation has no fundraising affiliation with any other breast cancer organization or 3rd party telemarketers.

VBCF is a Better Business Bureau accredited charity. Your privacy and security is important to us. We are committed to the honest and accurate disclosure of our programmatic and financial activities to insure that our donors are confident about the charitable use of their funds. You can view our Privacy Policy and our Fundraising and Donations Policy at www.vbcf.org/vbcf-privacy-policy.

Protect Yourself

- If you receive a call from someone asking for a donation, ask the caller to send you more information by mail.
- Research the organization before making a gift. You can research non-profit organizations through GuideStar (www.guidestar.org) or the Better Business Bureau (see box above.)
- Don’t give out your credit card information over the phone unless you initiate the call, and you know the organization is reputable.

If you are receiving persistent or troublesome telemarketing calls, get as much information as you can from the caller and contact your local Better Business Bureau to file a complaint.

Better Business Bureaus in VA


Online: www.bbb.org
Want to Go Green?

Save paper and trees by receiving our newsletter via e-mail. Visit www.vbcf.org/go-green to sign up!

Support VBCF!

Give online at www.vbcf.org/donate.

It's fast, easy & secure!

Or, fill out form(s) and return with your check to VBCF.

☐ Please contact me about becoming a VBCF Volunteer.

☐ Please send me information on planned giving.

☐ $50  ☐ $100  ☐ $25  ☐ $500  ☐ $1,000  ☐ Other $ ____________

A contribution of $ ____________ is enclosed.

In Memory Of: __________________________________________

or In Honor Of: __________________________________________

(If you would like an acknowledgement card sent, please in-
clude name and address of recipient.)

Name: __________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________

City: ___________________________ State: _______ Zip Code: _______

Phone: __________________________ Fax: __________________________ e-mail: __________________________

This newsletter, published by the Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation, focuses on breast cancer issues and the activities of VBCF supporters. If you have any comments, please call 800-345-VBCF or write to: Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation, 5004 Monument Avenue, Suite 102, Henrico, VA 23230.