



City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Legislation Text

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Authorizing the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings examining the state of breast cancer incidence and mortality in Philadelphia; the impact of the closure of the Susan G. Komen Philadelphia chapter, particularly on women of color; and other resources and organizations available to help the City prioritize breast cancer control initiatives in Philadelphia.

WHEREAS, The National Cancer Institute predicts the number of people who will die from breast or colon cancer in the United States will increase by nearly 10,000 over the next decade because the COVID-19 pandemic has caused delays in cancer screening, diagnoses, and an overall reduction in oncology care; and

WHEREAS, The National Cancer Institute's Surveillance, Epidemiology, and End Results Program estimates that in 2020, 276,480 women in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer and 42,170 will die of the disease; and

WHEREAS, The inaugural progress report on the state of cancer health disparities published by the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) in September 2020 states that racial and ethnic minority populations in the U.S. have long experienced cancer health disparities. Black Americans in particular have had the highest overall cancer death rate of any racial or ethnic group in the nation for more than four decades. Black Americans have a 39% higher risk of dying from breast cancer as compared with their white counterparts. Breast cancer is also the most commonly diagnosed cancer among Black women; and

WHEREAS, In September 2020, Drexel University's report on the state of cancer in Philadelphia revealed that incidence and mortality for several types of common cancers are higher in Philadelphia than in Pennsylvania as a whole. In Philadelphia, cancer mortality is higher for Black Americans and communities with lower levels of education than for other racial groups and communities with higher levels of education. The incidence for breast cancer has increased specifically among Black women; and

WHEREAS, According to the AACR, the past two decades have brought about the formation of powerful national and local African American breast cancer advocacy organizations, such as the Sisters Network, Inc., Black Women's Health Imperative, African American Breast Cancer Alliance, and the African American Breast Cancer Coalition. These organizations have been successful at raising public and political awareness, calling attention to improved accountability for quality care and policies, and elevating cancer health disparities as a public health priority. These awareness efforts have also encouraged new funding streams for breast cancer disparities research. For example, the Breast Cancer Foundation and the Susan G. Komen Foundation have funded close to \$100 million in research programs to end breast cancer disparities and secure health equity for all breast cancer patients; and

WHEREAS, In October 2020, Susan G. Komen, the nation's largest and best-funded breast cancer philanthropy, announced that the 38-year-old organization would close all of its regional affiliates, including Pittsburgh and Philadelphia. According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, the closing comes as a result of the foundation's attempts to cut costs, modernize, and cope with the pandemic. In April 2020, Komen announced plans to reorganize the foundation's mission and integrate the work of its affiliate networks under one national

organization; and

WHEREAS, According to CBS Philly, Komen Philadelphia has raised more than \$63.7 million in community grants over the last three decades, which have funded lifesaving programs of the health care partners within the 15 counties it serves, \$28 million for breast cancer research, and has funded more than 184,550 free mammograms for women in need within its service area; and

WHEREAS, Elaine Grobman, chief executive of the Philadelphia affiliate of Komen, stated that the organization will shift its focus to patient assistance by helping women with the costs of breast cancer treatment and related expenses; and

WHEREAS, Recent studies have shown that racial and ethnic disparities in cancer development, treatment, and mortality can be eliminated if every patient has equal access to standard treatment. However, many communities do not have access to the resources necessary for preventative care. Therefore, it is imperative that the City raise awareness of the state of cancer in Philadelphia, and support innovative strategies and community-based organizations to increase access to cancer screenings, preventative care, and other cancer control initiatives; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA, That Council does hereby authorize the Committee on Public Health and Human Services to hold hearings examining the state of breast cancer incidence and mortality in Philadelphia; the impact of the closure of the Susan G. Komen Philadelphia chapter, particularly on women of color; and other resources and organizations available to help the City prioritize breast cancer control initiatives in Philadelphia.