

October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

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October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month across the nation. Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed non-skin cancer in women. One out of every eight women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime.

According to Ms. Gail Whitehead with the Medical Research and Materiel Command, "This year, approximately 226,870 women in the U.S. will receive a diagnosis of invasive breast cancer and 63,300 women will be diagnosed with in situ breast cancer." She added, "In addition, although male breast cancer is rare and accounts for less than 1 percent of all breast carcinomas in the U.S., about 2,190 men will be diagnosed with breast cancer this year." Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in women in the United States. Approximately 39,510 women and 410 men in the U.S. are projected to die from breast cancer this year.

The Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program (BCRP) was established in 1992 as a result of the powerful effort of breast cancer advocates. Their continued efforts, in concert with the program's successes, have resulted in more than \$2.6 billion in congressional appropriations through fiscal year 2011 executed by the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs of the United States Army Medical Research and Materiel Command. The BCRP vision is adapted yearly to ensure that the program remains responsive to what is currently happening in the research community. Over the years, the BCRP has created and introduced unique funding mechanisms to support a broad portfolio of research and training awards that have transformed the breast cancer field. The BCRP challenges scientists to pursue high-risk, high-reward research that has the potential to make major leaps to eradicate the disease. The program is committed to supporting new, innovative ideas that reflect new discoveries and could lead to breakthroughs. The BCRP also promotes synergistic collaborations across disciplines and integrates scientists and consumers in unique research partnerships.

In 1992, the Army began a breast cancer research program in conjunction with acquiring mammography equipment. That year, a highly visible lobbying campaign by grassroots advocacy organizations, primarily the National Breast Cancer Coalition, increased awareness among policymakers of the need to expand funding for breast cancer research. These consumer groups emphasized the need to fund research in ways that were different from those employed by traditional medical research organizations such as the National Institutes of Health. In response, the Congress allocated specific funds for breast cancer research in the Department of Defense appropriations budget and the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs were formed to execute peer reviewed funding in breast cancer. The Department of Defense was chosen because of its long history in performing medical research studies and because its administrative structure was designed for flexible and quick responses to changing needs and priorities. Funds have continued to be specified by Congress and from 1992-2011 over \$2.6 billion dollars have been included in appropriations, with an additional \$22 million through the sale of the United States Breast Cancer Research Semi-postal Stamp.

During the past 20 years, the Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program has funded over 6100 research awards and brought forward new diagnostics, therapeutic drugs,

mammography registries for surveillance, improved website information, advances in identification of genetic bio-markers, and therapeutic development using nanotechnology.

Early detection of the breast cancer can provide early treatment for the service member and or their beneficiaries. For those women diagnosed with localized (stage 1) breast cancer there is over a 98% probability that they will survive 5 or more years. Lowering the risk of death from breast cancer for service members and their beneficiaries contributes to the readiness and well being of those who serve.

As requested by Congress, the Army will continue to find and fund innovative research in breast cancer and partner with Tri-Service and Veteran's Affairs to bring research advances forward for evidence based prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of breast cancer.

For More information see website: <http://cdmrp.army.mil/bcrp/default.shtml>