



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR
Catharine Young

Cancer Services Program of Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties Receives Funding Boost Thanks to Support from Senator Young

CATHARINE YOUNG September 3, 2015

| ISSUE: **HEALTH**



\$50,000 grant will help the organization provide additional support to area residents

BELMONT – Greater awareness of early, life-saving cancer screening and treatment options will soon be available as the Cancer Services Program of Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties expands its reach thanks to valuable new funding.

Senator Catharine Young (R,C,I - Olean) announced today that she has secured a \$50,000 grant for the organization, allocated through the State Senate, that will provide an immediate positive impact for area residents. The grant will allow for expanded early screening options and stronger support for those suffering from the intense financial

burden that comes with a cancer diagnosis.

“Cancer touches the lives of thousands of area residents every day,” said Senator Young.

“Early screening and detection often mean the difference between life and death. The impact emotionally is tremendous, but often an additional shock comes as the cost for treatment, doctor’s visits, and medications begin to add up. Regrettably, those with limited financial means are often unable to avail themselves of critical early diagnosis procedures that reduce the mortality rate.

“The Cancer Services Program of Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties provides screening for early detection, along with long-term support for those receiving a positive diagnosis, so that they can become a survivor. Each day they see firsthand how devastating a cancer diagnosis can be on a family. The program’s services and support are a life-saver for many in need,” said Senator Young.

For uninsured and underinsured residents, the Cancer Services Program of Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties offers free mammograms to women age 40 and older, as well as those at high risk for breast cancer. The program also offers free pap tests to women age 40 and older. Free colorectal cancer tests are available to men and women age 50 and over, or to anyone who is at high risk of colorectal cancer. They also provide assistance for companies looking at paid leave for cancer screening.

Officials from the program are thrilled to receive the funding and confident about the positive impact of the grant.

Madelyn Thornton, Program Coordinator for the Cancer Services Program of Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties, said, “We are so thankful for the funds Senator Young has obtained for the Cancer Services Program of Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties. With these funds we will be able to increase our outreach and educational efforts, thus improving the cancer screening rates and reducing the number of residents who will face a cancer diagnosis. With regular recommended cancer screenings, cancers and pre-cancerous conditions can be detected early when treatment is most effective. With early detection, not only is treatment most effective, but survival rates improve and overall medical costs are reduced.”

“Another way to increase cancer screening rates is for employers to provide paid time off solely for employees to receive recommended cancer screenings. Evidence shows that if

people are given time off from work for cancer screenings they are more likely to do so. Cancer Services Program is working with area employers to see how they can improve the screening rates among their workforce,” said Ms. Thornton.

Lori Ballengee, Public Health Director for Allegany County, said, “It is with great pride and gratitude that the Health Department accepts this grant provided through Senator Young’s office. As a breast cancer survivor diagnosed during a routine mammogram, I am intimately aware of the truly life-saving impact cancer screenings have on our residents. This funding will go a long way in saving many more lives affected by this devastating disease. A sincere and heartfelt thank you goes to Senator Young for valuing the well-being and lives of her constituents.”

Dr. Kevin Watkins, Public Health Director for Cattaraugus County, said, “Breast cancer screening, including clinical breast exam and mammography, is important for all women because it saves lives. Screening tests can find breast cancer early, when the chances of survival are highest. Cattaraugus County salutes Senator Young in her efforts to secure this additional funding for those who are underinsured and uninsured in our community, and her efforts will not go unnoticed.”

Eligible residents who are looking to receive screening through the program can sign up by contacting the program’s office in Belmont or Wellsville. Patients who qualify are then referred to a network provider from Cattaraugus or Allegany County.

Twice each year, the Cancer Services Program of Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties works with several partners to bring a mobile mammogram van into rural communities, allowing for additional cancer screening opportunities. The Cancer Services Program of Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties also hosts regular screening events that provide at-risk patients the chance to be seen by a small group of area providers.

Over the past five years, the Cancer Services Program of Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties has screened 1,018 area residents for various forms of cancer. The program has diagnosed 20 cases of breast cancer in women, one case of cervical cancer along with 12 pre-cancerous lesions, and 23 cases of colon cancer.

Lauren Law, who received assistance from the Cancer Services of Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties during her battle with cancer, said, “For me, early detection led to a victory in the

battle for my life, and has allowed me to meet four grandchildren I might never have known. Only two years later, I sat with my mother as she passed away from breast cancer that was not detected until it had spread through her body. There really are not words to express the kind of appreciation I feel for the services provided – from early detection through a mammogram, biopsy, surgery and follow-up treatment provided through this program.”

New York State Department of Health statistics from 2008 – 2012, the most recent years for which data is available, show that Allegany County has on average 39 breast cancer diagnoses in women which result in an average of seven deaths each year. The county also averages about 29 cases of colorectal cancer, resulting in about 10 deaths annually. Numbers for Cattaraugus County are higher, with annual averages of about 69 breast cancer diagnoses and 11 deaths, and about 50 colorectal cancer diagnoses and 15 deaths.

County officials applauded the funding announcement by Senator Young, citing the countless good works done by the program and the immediate positive impact the funding will have on area residents.

Curtis Crandall, Chair of the Allegany County Board of Legislators, said, “We are very grateful that Senator Young was able to secure this funding for Allegany County. Each of us at one time or another has been directly affected by having a friend, neighbor or family member suffer from a personal battle with cancer. With more early screening and the ability to get a jump on proper treatment, the chances to overcome and beat the odds are dramatically improved.”

Mitchell Alger, Allegany County Administrator, said, “I would like to thank Senator Young for securing additional funding to support the Cancer Services Program of Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties. Thanks to the Senator’s efforts, many residents of our community will benefit from the services needed to fight cancer. This funding will help the families in Allegany County overcome the emotional, financial, and physical trauma associated with fighting and, ultimately, beating the cancer afflicting them.”

Along with the funding announced today, in this year’s state budget Senator Young supported \$25.3 million in funding for Cancer Services statewide. She also supported numerous programs as part of the 2015-16 State Budget, including \$15.5 million for Roswell Park Cancer Institute, \$200,000 for the Breast Cancer Coalition of Rochester, and \$50,000 for the New York State Breast Cancer Network.

Additional statistics regarding cancer rates for Allegany County can be found [here](#).

Additional statistics regarding cancer rates for Cattaraugus County can be found [here](#).

###