

(Washington, DC) Today, Congressman Alcee L. Hastings (D-Miramar) made the following statement recognizing National Breast Cancer Awareness Month:

"For more than 20 years, the observance of National Breast Cancer Awareness Month each October has provided a time for us all to reflect on those who battle breast cancer every day, those who have lost the battle against the disease, and the 2.5 million survivors across the country. This month, we stand together in the fight to find a cure to this horrible disease.

"Breast cancer is the second leading cause of death among women. Every two minutes, a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer, and every thirteen minutes one woman dies of the disease in the United States. In Florida alone, about 15,000 new cases of breast cancer were diagnosed in 2011, and an estimated 2,700 of these women will die from the disease. While women who have a family history of breast cancer are in a higher risk group, most women who have breast cancer have no genetic predisposition. Statistically, only 15 percent of individuals diagnosed with breast cancer have a family history of the disease. In addition, whereas breast cancer in men is rare, with 1 out of every 1000 men diagnosed each year, the mortality rate is much higher due to reduced awareness.

"The National Breast Cancer Foundation recommends that all women maintain healthy eating habits, stay physically active, and limit the consumption of tobacco and alcohol in order to reduce the risk of getting breast cancer. In addition, prevention and early detection are crucial to saving lives. Early detection includes breast self-exams and regular clinical screenings. Breast cancer can be diagnosed through multiple tests, including mammograms, ultrasounds, MRIs, and biopsies. When breast cancer is detected early, at a localized stage, the survival rate is 98 percent.

"I commend the men and women who have survived breast cancer, those who fight the disease every day, and those who work tirelessly to end it. Together, we can eradicate the disease. I will continue the effort in Congress by promoting breast health awareness and education, supporting research, and ensuring that those affected receive high quality and affordable care."

Congressman Alcee L. Hastings serves as Senior Member of the House Rules Committee, Ranking Democratic Member of the U.S. Helsinki Commission, and Democratic Chairman of the Florida Delegation.

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