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**Press Release** Re: Consumer Participation on Scientific Peer Review Panels

For Immediate Release

**SCIENTIFIC PEER REVIEW OF BREAST CANCER RESEARCH APPLICATIONS FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**

September 1, 2013, Breast cancer advocate Latrice Collins recently participated in the evaluation of research applications submitted to the Breast Cancer Research Program (BCRP) sponsored by the Department of Defense. Ms. Collins was nominated for participation in the program by Survivors on Purpose associated with Baylor Hospital of Irving. As a consumer reviewer, she was a full voting member, along with prominent scientists, at meetings to help determine how the \$120 million appropriated by Congress for Fiscal Year 2013 (FY13) will be spent on future breast cancer research.

Consumer reviewers are asked to represent the collective view of breast cancer survivors and patients, family members, and persons at risk for the disease when they prepare comments on the impact of the research on issues such as disease prevention, screening, diagnosis, treatment, and quality of life after treatment. Commenting on her role as a consumer reviewer, Latrice Collins said that "As a breast cancer survivor it was important to me to help in the fight against cancer. Preparing to participate in this program was similar to crunching for my masters degree. It took a great deal of work and dedication. However, when I set amongst so many brilliant scientists and medical professionals who treated consumer reviewers like peers, the entire experience became humbling and completing rewarding. I am truly proud to be a part of such a well organized and powerful program".

Consumer advocates and scientists have worked together in this unique partnership to evaluate the scientific merit of breast cancer research applications since 1995. To date, more than 790 consumer reviewers have served on breast cancer panels alongside scientists in the review process. Colonel Jeffrey C. Leggit, M.D., Director of the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs, expressed his appreciation for the perspectives of the consumer advocates in the scientific review sessions. "The Consumer Reviewers on each panel are instrumental in helping the scientists understand the patient's perspective and provided valuable insight into the potential impact of the proposed project. They bring with them a sense of urgency and remind all of the human element involved in medical research."

Thousands of breast cancer research applications will be reviewed for 2013 fiscal year funds. Scientists applying propose to conduct innovative breast cancer research aimed at the elimination of breast cancer. The BCRP fills important gaps not addressed by other funding agencies by supporting groundbreaking, high-risk, high-gain research while encouraging out-of-the-box thinking.

More information about the Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program is available at the Website: <http://cdmrp.army.mil>.

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