

December 11, 2009

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Office of the Governor  
State Capitol Building  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

I am writing on behalf of breast cancer patients, survivors and advocates in the Susan G. Komen for the Cure family to express our grave concern about the recently announced cuts to California's *Every Woman Counts* program.

The cuts to *Every Woman Counts* will effectively shut the doors to breast cancer screening services for 1.2 million low-income, uninsured women for the first six months of 2010. When the program reopens in the summer, women age 40 to 49 will no longer be served. This decision significantly reduces the number of women in the state that will have access to affordable breast cancer screenings, potentially putting their lives at risk.

The situation is even more difficult because it comes on the heels of the new mammography screening recommendations recently unveiled by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, which generated significant controversy and confusion about the value of screening mammography in younger women. We do not want to see the cuts in California — compounded by the new USPSTF recommendations — used by other states to justify cutting women's health services to reduce budget gaps.

We understand the tough economic situation you face and the difficult choices you must make to balance the state's budget. However, balancing the budget on the backs of California's neediest women is a mistake.

Early detection of breast cancer is a key to surviving the disease. Unfortunately, women with low incomes who are uninsured or underinsured — like those eligible for *Every Woman Counts* — are more likely to skip potentially life-saving cancer screenings, which leads to later diagnoses, larger tumors and lower survival rates. And without *Every Woman Counts*, many of these women will have nowhere else to go.

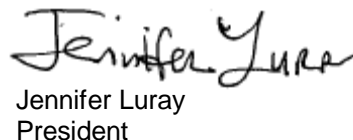
In California alone, 21,700 women will have been diagnosed with breast cancer this year and more than 4,000 will have lost their battle with the disease. The decision to restrict access to the *Every Woman Counts* program makes the problem even worse.

Governor Schwarzenegger, we respectfully request that you turn back these cuts and ensure the state's neediest women will continue to have access to lifesaving breast cancer screening services.

Sincerely,



Nancy G. Brinker  
Founder & Chief Executive Officer  
Susan G. Komen for the Cure



Jennifer Luray  
President  
Komen Advocacy Alliance

cc: Mark B Horton, Director, California Department of Public Health