



August 2, 2021

The Honorable Diane Feinstein
331 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Marsha Blackburn
357 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 2051

Re: Support for the *Protecting Access to Lifesaving Screenings (PALS) Act of 2021*

Senator Feinstein and Senator Blackburn:

Founded in 1995, the American Society of Breast Surgeons (ASBrS) is the primary leadership organization for surgeons who treat patients with breast cancer and benign breast related diseases. We are committed to continually improving the practice of breast surgery. Our mission is accomplished by providing a forum for the exchange of ideas and by promoting education, research, and the development of advanced surgical techniques. ASBrS now has more than 3,100 members throughout the United States and in 35 countries around the world. Active membership is open to surgeons with a special interest in breast disease.

We write to express support for the *Protecting Access to Lifesaving Screenings (PALS) Act of 2021*, which would extend the existing moratorium on implementation of a recommendation by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force to begin biennial breast cancer screenings at age 50 instead of the previously recommended 40. Legislatively delaying this recommendation protects coverage of important breast cancer screenings and prevents insurers from putting in place out-of-pocket financial burdens that would prevent young women from accessing preventive care.

Women under the age of forty tend not to consider themselves at risk for breast cancer, but approximately 5% of all breast cancer cases occur in this age group.¹ More concerning, when younger women are diagnosed with breast cancer, their survival rates are worse compared to older patients. That is due to a combination of factors, including more aggressive cancers, but also later detection. Improving screening rates in young women will not result in less aggressive cancers but it will result in earlier detection, which in and of itself helps improve survival rates.

¹ Cleveland Clinic: "Breast Cancer in Young Women"; Available: <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/16805-breast-cancer-in-young-women>.

As such, we strongly support continuing the moratorium to avoid any barriers to screening rates for women under fifty, which is precisely what your legislation would accomplish.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. If we can provide any additional information to help advance the *PALS Act*, please contact Sharon Grutman, Manager of Advocacy, Communications, & Quality Initiatives, at sgrutman@breastsurgeons.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julie Margenthaler". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie Margenthaler, MD, FACS
President
American Society of Breast Surgeons