



The Male Breast Cancer Coalition (MBCC).

Cheri Ambrose

Co-founder, male breast cancer coalition, United States

Abstract:

February 13, 2019 marked the 5th anniversary of The Male Breast Cancer Coalition (MBCC). This non-profit and awareness foundation was established with the objectives of saving lives through advocacy, education and a complete resource access of any and all support facilities and clinical information leading to the diagnosis, treatment and prevention of Male Breast Cancer.

Origins of the MBCC came from the partnership between MBCC President and Co-founder, Cheri Ambrose of New Jersey and co-founder Bret Miller of Kansas City who is recorded as the youngest male worldwide to contract breast cancer. Bret was just 17 years old when he found a lump during a high school sports physical. For six years he was told by various doctors that it was nothing to worry about, just calcium that would dissipate as he got older. Bret underwent a mastectomy for breast cancer at the age of 24. He promised his doctor that if cured, he would become the face of breast cancer for me. He started his own awareness foundation, the Bret Miller 1T Foundation with his mother Peggy Miller as his manager and was attending many of the local 5k races and breast cancer events in Kansas City in an effort to bring awareness to the risk men face.

Cheri had been working at her own organization in New Jersey known as the Blue Wave. The Blue Wave was born out of a need for awareness after a very dear friend had been diagnosed with breast cancer. He went from being a vibrant, outgoing person into a virtual hermit, shutting himself off from everyone due to embarrassment of having a women's disease. Once connecting, through social media and an hour-long phone call with Peggy Miller, Bret's mother and foundation manager, the two knew there was so much more they could do together and joined forces and never looked back. To date touching the lives of over 500 men diagnosed with breast cancer around the world.

ADVOCACY

Advocacy is a key component to the MBCC. We give men with breast cancer a platform from which they can speak openly and honestly about their journey all in hopes of saving others from the loneliness and stigma of the breast cancer world.



We have come a long way in the short time since founding the MBCC in our awareness efforts but we certainly need to continue advocating for men to be included in the BC conversation. This means being considered more as survivors or patients themselves and not just brave caregivers for their wives, mothers, sisters or female family members. It means including men in major breast cancer trials and studies as they are being given the exact same drugs and treatments as their female counterparts.

This also means teaching about breast cancer in men in medical school and ending the numbers game. Saying ONLY 1% of men get breast cancer keeps the stigma alive. It keeps men from being checked, it keeps the mortality rate in men with breast cancer higher than women.

The mission of the MBCC is to advocate for change in the way breast cancer is viewed by everyone including members of the medical community, research community, pharmaceutical companies and insurance companies as well as the general public. The MBCC carries the proven belief that most men are either caught unaware or stay in denial about getting checked for breast cancer because of the stigma surrounding the word "breast" as something only women have. The truth being everyone has breast tissue and therefore can be at risk for developing the disease.

According to the American Cancer Society, 2,670 men will be diagnosed in 2019 with breast cancer and an estimated 500 of them will die due to lack of awareness and/or misdiagnosis and that is just here in the United States. This does not take into account the countless hundreds of men around the world who are also being diagnosed.

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