

From: Alice Leeds [mailto:aleeds@gmavt.net]
Sent: Wednesday, January 24, 2018 9:11 PM
To: Loring Starr
Subject: Access to Primary Health Care

To Vermont State Legislators;

As a breast cancer survivor, I am acutely aware of the importance of access to primary care. During my cancer journey, I met women who delayed going to the doctor because they did not have health insurance, even though they suspected something was wrong. Although a primary health care program will not cover treatment for cancer, it will bring individuals into the health care system when they are still receptive to treatment.

In my breast cancer support group, I met a young woman in her twenties who did not return to her primary care physician even though she was advised to do so, and as a result her breast cancer diagnosis was far less optimistic. I also met a woman who delayed a visit to her primary care doctor after noticing a suspicious lump because she did not have health care through her job. She did not survive the disease, though she would have had a far better chance of survival with an earlier diagnosis.

When I was diagnosed with breast cancer at age 47, I was fortunate to have health care coverage through my teaching position. In fact, because I have a family history of this disease, I had been closely monitored before the diagnosis. I am now 65, and I am grateful for each day I can wake up and enjoy the lovely cycle of the seasons. Without health insurance, I might not be here.

I urge you to pass legislation that provides free access to primary health care for all Vermonters.

Alice Leeds
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