



METAVIVOR

Metastatic Breast Cancer Research, Support and Advocacy

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum,

As Congress considers appropriations for FY 2027, METAvivor urges you to approve \$150 million in funding for the Peer-Reviewed Breast Cancer Research Program (BCRP), part of the Department of War Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP).

METAvivor is a volunteer-led, nonprofit organization dedicated to funding research that improves both the quality and length of life for individuals living with stage 4 metastatic breast cancer (MBC). Our mission is rooted in hope and action as we advocate for increased public awareness of the unique needs of the MBC community, provide strength and purpose to patients, and maximize the impact of every dollar we invest in critical research.

Since the BCRP first received Congressional funding in 1993, the program has pursued a vital mission “to end breast cancer for Service Members and their Families, Veterans, and the general public by funding innovative, high-impact research through a partnership of scientists and consumers.”¹ This partnership model, unlike any other federal cancer research program, has made the BCRP a national leader in innovation and accountability.

¹ Department of Defense Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs. Breast Cancer Research Program Strategic Plan. Department of War. November 2024. Accessed March 11, 3036.
<https://cdmrp.health.mil/bcrp/pdfs/BCRPStrategicPlan.pdf>

The Case for Increased Funding

Metastatic breast cancer occurs when cancer cells spread from the breast to other parts of the body, most often the bones, liver, lungs, or brain, with only one-third of people living more than five years after diagnosis. An estimated 170,000 women are currently living with MBC and 2,670 men will be diagnosed with MBC in 2026.² Annually, MBC claims 43,000 women's lives and 530 men's lives in the U.S.

Research progress has modestly extended survival for some, yet the 5-year relative survival rate for Stage 4 breast cancer in women is 33%, a stark contrast from other breast cancer outcomes.³ Despite the fact that nearly all those who die with breast cancer have stage 4 MBC, only a fraction of breast cancer research funding is dedicated to metastasis.

The BCRP is uniquely positioned to fill this gap by supporting transformative science that traditional funding sources may overlook. BCRP-backed discoveries have led to significant advances, such as the development of targeted therapies like trastuzumab (Herceptin) for HER2-positive breast cancer, which has dramatically improved patient survival.⁴ Yet even these breakthroughs do not fully address the biological complexity of metastatic disease or the urgent need for additional therapies, especially therapies tailored to resistant tumor types and underserved populations.

Restoring funding to \$150 million--the FY 2024 level--would ensure that the BCRP can sustain and expand its investment in researching areas such as:

- Understanding why some breast cancers become metastatic
- Identifying new markers to predict the risk of metastasis or new targets for drug development
- Clinical trials testing new treatments for metastatic breast cancer
- Eliminating the mortality associated with metastatic breast cancer

At a time when the scientific community is poised to translate new biological insights into life-threatening treatments, it is imperative that support continues to grow. The impact of BCRP-funded programs is clear with over 19,400 scientific publications and over 1,300 patents, patent applications and invention reports, and have contributed to

² Metastatic Breast Cancer. Susan G. Komen. Updated June 3, 2025. Accessed March 11, 2026. <https://www.komen.org/breast-cancer/facts-statistics/what-is-breast-cancer/metastatic-breast-cancer/>

³ Survival Rates for Breast Cancer. Last Revised January 13, 2026. Accessed March 11, 2026. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/breast-cancer/understanding-a-breast-cancer-diagnosis/breast-cancer-survival-rates.html>

⁴ THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE FOR HEALTH AFFAIRS. REPORT TO THE CONGRESSIONAL DEFENSE COMMITTEES IN RESPONSE TO HOUSE REPORT 115-769, PAGE 296, ACCOMPANYING H.R. 6157, THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2019 August 2019. Accessed March 11, 2026. <https://health.mil/Reference-Center/Congressional-Testimonies/2019/08/28/Metastatic-Cancer-Research>

significant breakthroughs in treatments, diagnostics and prognostics, risk assessments and resources⁵.

For Service Members, Veterans, and civilians alike, metastatic breast cancer remains a devastating and urgent challenge. The BCRP represents our best hope for changing that reality.

METAvivor respectfully urges Congress to restore BCRP funding to \$150 million in FY 2027 to sustain the program's momentum and ensure continued progress toward ending deaths from breast cancer and to the benefit of both our service members and the public. For more information, contact Michelle Artz at Michelle@federalgrp.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Kelly Shanahan', with a stylized, flowing script.

Kelly Shanahan, MD
President and Director of Research, METAvivor
Living with metastatic breast cancer since 2013

⁵ Department of Defense Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs. Breast Cancer Research Program Strategic Plan. Department of War. November 2024. Accessed March 11, 3036.
<https://cdmrp.health.mil/bcrp/pdfs/BCRPStrategicPlan.pdf>