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NEW REPORT ON BREAST CANCER NAMES FLORIDA AS ONE OF THE “MOST RESTRICTIVE” FOR STATE ASSISTED BREAST CANCER TREATMENT

TAMPA, FL – November 26, 2007 -- A new report released today by Susan G. Komen for the Cure, the global leader in the breast cancer movement, names Florida as one of the “most restrictive” states for women seeking state assistance during breast cancer treatment.

The *State of Breast Cancer Report*, (<http://www.komen.org/sobc2007>) states that Florida is part of a minority of states that still determines a woman ineligible for Medicaid-funded treatment unless she was screened through the state program, restricting access to care for those diagnosed elsewhere (see page 21).

The Florida Suncoast Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure is on a mission to lobby the state legislature to change laws affecting women seeking Medicaid-funded treatment for breast cancer. The affiliate also encourages survivors, their families and the Tampa Bay community to contact their local and state representatives, urging them to revisit the laws governing breast cancer treatment.

“As women, we often say ‘it will never happen to me,’ but the startling fact is that more than 16,000 Florida women will face diagnosis of breast cancer this year and 2,600 will die,” says Lynn Rasys, Executive Director of the Florida Suncoast Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure. “It’s time we take a stand and ensure that we have our state’s support if Medicaid-funded breast cancer treatment is ever needed for ourselves, our children, or our grandchildren.”

In the Florida Suncoast area which encompasses Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk and Sarasota counties, at least 3000 people will learn “you have breast cancer” and 500 will die from the disease. Last year alone, the Komen Florida Suncoast Affiliate provided 2,500 initial screening mammograms, 1,100 initial diagnostic procedures including biopsies, with 89 women diagnosed and treated for breast cancer. In addition, the affiliate reached over 60,000 people through educational and support programs. This was made possible through grants awarded to twenty local non-profit organizations totaling \$975,000.

“We’re making strides to find a cure for breast cancer and we’re working hard to help women all over our service area,” says Rasys. “But, people still need to realize that breast cancer continues to be a major threat to a woman’s life. Too many people,

particularly people of certain ethnic and racial minorities and those with little or no health insurance, still die needlessly of breast cancer.”

The *State of Breast Cancer Report* is the first-ever, reader-friendly snapshot-in-time of where the United States and the global community are in the quest to end breast cancer forever. It provides information on advancements in diagnosis, treatment and research that have made breast cancer a survivable disease for more than 2 million people in the United States. But the news is not all good. The report also explores cultural, social, educational and financial barriers – or disparities – that prevent many people from getting screening and receiving life-saving breast cancer care.

Be one of the first to review this report at <http://www.komen.org/sobc2007>.

The national roll-out of the *State of Breast Cancer Report* is scheduled to coincide with the American Association of Cancer Research (AACR) meeting on health care disparities, which is scheduled for Nov. 27 – 30 in Atlanta.

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About the Florida Suncoast Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure

The Florida Suncoast Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure—along with those who generously support us with their talent, time and resources—is working to better the lives of those facing breast cancer in our community. We join more than 100,000 breast cancer survivors and activists around the globe as part of the world’s largest and most progressive grassroots network fighting breast cancer. Through events like the Komen Florida Suncoast Race for the Cure, we have invested \$5.1 million in local breast health and breast cancer awareness projects in six Florida counties: Hillsborough, Manatee, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk, and Sarasota. Up to 75 percent of net proceeds generated by the Komen Florida Suncoast Affiliate are returned to the community while the remaining income goes to the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Award and Research Grant Programs supporting research, awards and educational and scientific programs around the world. In 2007, the Florida Suncoast Affiliate awarded 26 grants for a total of nearly a million dollars to the community to support a variety of programs supporting breast cancer awareness. Learn more at www.komensuncoast.org.