RESEARCH

The research component of Breast Cancer Deadline 2020® includes the Artemis Project®, an advocate-led, innovative, mission-driven approach of strategic summits, catalytic workshops, action plans and collaborative efforts of various stakeholders, focusing on two areas:

PRIMARY PREVENTION

**VACCINE PROJECT**

After several years of collaboration and research, and with work progressing rapidly on a pre-IND package, in 2017 we formally began interacting with the FDA to work toward approval of the Artemis preventive vaccine. At the March, 2017 Artemis meeting, an international team of scientists with wide ranging expertise, together with advocates, produced a number of recommendations for the pre-clinical work leading to a clinical trial. Participants identified three topics for focused discussion: a discussion of various vector systems, a vision for future interaction with the FDA, and a design for the first clinical trial.

PREVENTION OF METASTASIS

Artemis participants produced a number of recommendations during 2017 for our work to prevent metastatic disease. Plans that outlined pre-clinical and clinical work towards immunologic and other approaches were developed, focusing on how tumor dormancy can be leveraged to prevent metastatic disease. As follow-on to the annual March meeting, a small group of Artemis participants met in New York in April. The meeting included an update on DCIS research that was facilitated through an Artemis seed grant as well as further discussion about the metastasis project.

DNA.LAND

In May 2017, an innovative partnership with New York Genome Center, DNA.Land, and Peter Fasching, UCLA, was officially launched through the Artemis Project®. The purpose of the initiative is to develop a large scale resource to study breast cancer recurrence. This project crowd sources genomic data and expands the web platform DNA.Land to include a focus on breast cancer. Currently, over 15,000 people have completed a clinical questionnaire specific to breast cancer as part of the project.

OUTREACH

NBCC either presented at or attended a number of national meetings on the issue of clinical trials research, patient advocate involvement in clinical trials and Deadline 2020® research efforts. These included the June 2017 ASCO Annual Meeting in Chicago, a global meeting on Ensuring Safety, Efficacy and Access to Medical Products in the Age of Global Deregulation at Yale in June, the National Academies of Sciences for the Committee on the Return of Individual-Specific Research Results Generated in Research Laboratories in September and The San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium in December.

Fran Visco continued to comment on breast cancer news and health care policy with statements appearing in news outlets such the New York Times, CNN, NPR, the Chicago Tribune, and USA Today.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

TEAM LEADER TRAINING

NBCC held a Team Leader Training in March 2017 and brought 25 selected breast cancer advocates from around the country to Washington for intensive training and development in grassroots advocacy, the federal legislative process, the NBCC legislative and public policy agenda, and lobbying techniques. Following training and preparation, activists spread across Capitol Hill meeting with Senators and Representatives and/or their staff to discuss and forward the NBCC legislative and public policy agenda. NBCC’s trained Team Leaders led these delegation visits.

ADVOCATE LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

An energized, committed and passionate group of over 120 NBCC leaders came together for our 2017 Advocate Leadership Summit in Arlington, VA on May 20 – May 23. The Summit was praised as “the best ever” by participants. The Summit featured sessions on immunology and primary prevention of breast cancer, as well as understanding and stopping metastasis and health care reform. The 2017 pre-conference program began with a Project LEAD® Workshop “Investigating the Etiology of Breast Cancer Metastasis Through Genetic and Genomic Screens.” Summit session topics included “Approaches to Health Care Reform: How to Make Sense of It All” and “An In-Depth Understanding of Congress’ Role in Ending Breast Cancer.”
PROJECT LEAD® INSTITUTE

In July, NBCC held our world-renowned Project LEAD® Institute. The diverse class of advocates gathered for a week of intense, dedicated study. The 2017 class included participants from 14 different states, Puerto Rico and an international advocate leader from Spain. The Institute sessions ranged from breast cancer biology and genetics, to DNA, RNA, and epidemiology, clinical trial research design and much more. The Institute provides advocates with the education and training needed to understand complex medical information, the nuances of research methodology and the unique role advocates play in influencing the research agenda.

PILOT PROGRAM - ADVANCED PROJECT LEAD®

In 2017, NBCC continued to pilot test a new training curriculum, Advanced Project LEAD®. This advanced program further trains advocates who have a deep interest in and propensity for taking leadership roles in breast cancer research advocacy as NBCC representatives. Building on the success of the 2016 program, Advocates developed a three-part research proposal around understanding whether and how the immune system and disseminated tumor cells interact and whether the tumor microenvironment affects their interaction with the immune system cells. Advocates were asked to propose a basic to preclinical to clinical study.

PROJECT LEAD® ADVANCED TOPICS

In December, Project LEAD® graduates gathered ahead of the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium for NBCC’s annual Project LEAD® Advanced Topics Session. These advocates enjoyed presentations from leading scientists on Models of Breast Cancer Metastasis and Dissemination, Early Seeding and Metastasis. Project LEAD advocates provided their insights from a patient advocate perspective and shared information on the dynamic breast cancer vaccine landscape. In addition to an advanced topic session at the Summit, we also hosted two LEADcasts “The Normal Breast and Its Development” and “The Immune System and Tumor Dormancy: Can we prevent lethal disease?”

PUBLIC POLICY

The National Breast Cancer Coalition (NBCC) Board of Directors establishes NBCC’s legislative and public policy priorities. Each year, issues are brought to the attention of NBCC staff; NBCC staff researches each issue, and prepares background information for the Board. The Board discusses all suggested priorities at the January board meeting and votes on those NBCC will adopt. Visit www.breastcancerdeadline2020.org for our 2017 priorities. Two of the 2017 legislative and public policy priorities are highlighted below.

DOD BREAST CANCER RESEARCH PROGRAM

In 1992, the Department of Defense Breast Cancer Research Program (DOD BCRP) started as a result of NBCC's campaign to increase federal appropriations for breast cancer research. The program remains a top priority for NBCC. Once again, Senator John McCain (R-AZ) attempted to do away with it. NBCC mobilized our National Action Network, along with our grassroots advocates across the country, and ratcheted up our advocacy on Capitol Hill to defeat McCain's efforts. Senator Dick Durbin (D-IL) introduced an amendment co-sponsored by 54 Senators to remove the harmful provisions. Thanks to the hard work of NBCC advocates, the amendment was successful and the program continues, bringing $3.3 billion to the worldwide research community since its inception.

NBCC’s Role in Protecting the Affordable Care Act (ACA)

Ensuring access to affordable and quality healthcare for women and men with, and at risk of, breast cancer has long been one of NBCC’s top priorities. NBCC advocates worked in collaboration with many other groups, to fight attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act in 2017. NBCC’s network stepped up and its voice was essential in the strong advocacy that ultimately defeated Congressional action to undermine the ACA.

NATIONAL ACTION NETWORK

Our grassroots leadership and National Action Network are key components of NBCC’s advocacy success. Made up of organizations and individuals across the country, this far-reaching grassroots network continues to empower women and men who share a sense of urgency about ending breast cancer. NBCC educates, informs and energizes this network throughout the year.

In 2017 NBCC held its Annual Lobby Day in May, where over 240 meetings occurred with members and congressional staff on Capitol Hill. Over 50 lobby day meetings were held in March as part of Team Leader Training. We sent 48 e-mailed alerts to our network asking advocates to contact specific legislators via phone and e-mail, and through Facebook and Twitter. NBCC Field staff also hosted leadership strategy conference calls each month.