



For additional information, contact
Mary McHugh, 314-910-1528 or
marymchugh1@mac.com

Gateway to Hope Launches Insurance Premium Program

*Money to help pay health insurance premiums
of those individuals in need who are diagnosed with breast cancer.*

ST. LOUIS (July 21, 2015) – Individuals diagnosed with breast cancer who need assistance paying their insurance premiums can now contact Gateway to Hope for help through the organization’s newly launched Insurance Premium Program (IPP), it was announced today by executive director Mary Lee Salzer.

The new program, funded entirely through corporate and private sector donations, will assist individuals undergoing breast cancer treatment and reconstruction with the payment of health insurance premiums. The program is open to individuals who live in Missouri and Illinois who are struggling with resources to help cover their treatment, and who meet the clinical and financial eligibility requirements. Patients accepted into the program are free to choose their insurance plan and their health care provider. Gateway to Hope is encouraging individuals to call its Breast Cancer Lifeline, 314-569-1113, to learn more about the program.

“Our hope is to remove some of the financial burden that comes with a breast cancer diagnosis so that these individuals can focus more of their energy on their health and getting better,” Salzer said. “This initiative allows us to broaden our reach tremendously. The ability for us to now be able to provide funding to more individuals who need assistance paying their insurance premiums, in addition to providing donated care and treatment, is revolutionary for our organization.”

Since 2005, Gateway to Hope has connected uninsured and underinsured breast cancer patients to medical, emotional and financial assistance. In 2014, the organization provided assistance to 214 patients, a 35 percent overall increase from the previous year, as well as free genetic testing. Dr. David Caplin, a reconstructive surgeon, and Dr. Marlys Schuh, an oncologic breast surgeon, founded the organization following the avoidable deaths of some of their breast cancer patients who had delayed treatment because they lacked insurance.

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Clinical staff are available via the Gateway to Hope Breast Cancer Lifeline and will be available to help individuals determine their needs, enroll them in the program if they qualify financially, direct them to other Gateway to Hope donated programs and funds, or identify additional resources within the community to help them navigate the treatment and care they deserve. Last year, the organization referred more than 100 individuals to other community resources.

“Insured or not, navigating the healthcare system can be challenging. We want patients at any level to know they are not alone on this journey,” Caplin said. “We are here to help every step of the way – answering questions and finding solutions. Our clinical team is qualified to evaluate every situation and advise on what we believe is best for the patient.”

In addition, Thelma’s Gift fund benefits Gateway to Hope patients undergoing treatment who are unable to pay for the necessities of life, including such things as help with rent or mortgage payments, gas cards to get to and from treatment, utilities to keep the lights on, and critical medications. Gateway to Hope patients may also benefit from Gail’s Legacy fund, which is used to make COBRA payments and help applicants who may be behind with monthly insurance premium payments.

About Gateway To Hope

Founded in 2005 by Dr. David Caplin, a plastic/reconstructive surgeon, and Dr. Marlys Schuh, an oncologic breast surgeon, Gateway to Hope has provided comprehensive donated medical care and financial assistance to uninsured or underinsured individuals in need who have been diagnosed with or are at high risk for developing breast cancer. More than 700 women have received services ranging from financial assistance with mortgage and utility payments to the full spectrum of surgical and medical care, at little or no cost. Through corporate and private sector donations, the Gateway to Hope Insurance Premium Program was initiated in 2015. This innovative program assists with the payment of health insurance premiums for individuals undergoing breast cancer treatment and reconstruction. For more information, if you or someone you know has breast cancer, please call the Gateway to Hope Breast Cancer Lifeline, 314-569-1113, or visit www.gthstl.org.

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