



ADELPHI NY STATEWIDE BREAST CANCER HOTLINE & SUPPORT PROGRAM
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**Joint Legislative Budget Hearing on Health
New York State FY2025 Executive Budget Proposal
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Submitted by:

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Executive Director, Adelphi NY Statewide Breast Cancer Hotline & Support Program

Adelphi University has a longstanding record of responding to needs in the community, with roots going back to its founding in 1863. In 1980, the first post-mastectomy group began at Adelphi's School of Social Work. The women in the support group, all of whom felt extremely isolated when they were diagnosed, found comfort in sharing their fears, questions and experiences among others who were experiencing the same feelings

This group decided to share their positive experience by reaching out to other women facing breast cancer. At a time in history when breast cancer was not even discussed publicly these group members, along with staff, faculty, and interns at Adelphi, developed the "Woman-to-Woman Hotline." By 1990, thanks to funding provided by New York State, which continued until recent years, the program expanded and became the Statewide Breast Cancer Hotline. Today, this program has professional social work and public health staff as well as trained volunteers who staff the hotline and website, and provide free counseling, education and advocacy programs to all New Yorkers.

For over 40 years, the Adelphi NY Statewide Breast Cancer Hotline & Support Program has been providing community outreach, licensed social work services (in English and Spanish) including individual and group counseling, educational forums, health referrals including free or low-cost mammography screening in partnership with the New York State Cancer Services Program, and hope to thousands of New Yorkers diagnosed with breast cancer. All our services are free and confidential.

This program's impact is undeniable. In 2023, the Adelphi Statewide Breast Cancer Hotline reached more than 20,000 New Yorkers with assistance. We attended over 80 community breast cancer awareness events reaching more than 6,500 attendees with culturally competent, linguistically appropriate services to the community. We educated 1,400 Spanish speaking and medically underserved women via breast cancer health workshops, provided 160 early detection mammography referrals, supported more than 1,100 patients via licensed counseling, and assisted over 700 patients with survivorship programs. With the support of other funders, the program also provided 150 meals and emergency transportation to 130 medically underserved breast cancer patients.

Unfortunately, Governor Hochul's FY2024 Executive Budget proposal (Aid to Localities budget) did not include new funding for the Statewide Breast Cancer Hotline and this will be devastating to its continued operation and success in serving those inflicted with breast cancer and their families.

New York State funding accounts for one-third of the program budget and is critical to Adelphi's ability to keep the program in operation. New York State began funding the Breast Cancer Hotline in 1990 at a level of \$283,300 and this continued on an annual basis until 2017. In 2017, the program entered into a five-year appropriation (through 2022) through the Department of Health (DOH) via the New York State Grants Gateway for \$283,300 per year. Beginning in 2019, the State Senate added an additional \$100,000 in funding to the program each year through another source of local grant funding.

Unfortunately, and despite Department of Health contract C32977GG, in FY2021 the program did not receive the \$283,300 via the FY2021 Executive Budget, and that funding was not restored during budget negotiations. However, we did continue to receive the \$100,000 in local grant funding sponsored by the Senate.

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In addition to losing the majority of our state funding in 2020 and receiving partial funding in recent years, COVID-19 also took its toll on charitable organizations and the program lost 40% of its other revenues overall, including monies from the Susan G. Komen organization, LI2 Day Walk and the Beth C. Tortolani Foundation which ceased operations. The program has also faced grant reductions from other breast cancer organizations including Kat's Ribbon of Hope and Pink Aid who were unable to hold gatherings or have capacity limits due to the pandemic.

To help offset these funding losses, we have submitted numerous grant applications, implemented cost-savings strategies, and organized fundraising efforts. We also have a full-time social work position that, due to a reduction in funding, has been vacant since September 2020. Adelphi University, which was also financially impacted due to COVID-19, has also waived the indirect costs for the program. While we have support from our Advisory Board, volunteers and community partners, our program's needs exceed these resources.

We are at a critical point in the Adelphi NY Statewide Breast Cancer Hotline & Support Program's history. Now, more than ever, our program has an essential role to play in providing licensed social work services for the breast cancer community. To sustain our programs, we need New York State funding to underwrite these complimentary services.

New York has always had a mission to provide and support healthcare for all; we ask, on behalf of the Adelphi University family and the statewide constituency that we serve, that the New York State continue to support this vital community program with an appropriation of \$283,300 in the FY2025 state budget.

We thank you for your consideration of the inclusion of this critical funding for Adelphi New York Statewide Breast Cancer Hotline and Support Program in the one-house budget proposals for \$283,300 for FY2025, and if possible, an additional \$100,000 in the Aid to Localities budget.

This year, the program has plans to focus on strategic planning, add texting to the breast cancer hotline, continue to provide licensed social work services, educational forums, and free or low-cost mammography screening. We also plan to install a Tree of Life in order to pay tribute to those we have lost to breast cancer. Finally, we have several marketing initiatives including a new video for National Cancer Prevention Month and a website redesign. In recent years, funding from New York State has decreased and yet the needs of New Yorkers and mental health needs have increased. We are very proud of the services we provide to your constituents.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact Reyna Machado at rmachado@adelphi.edu or 516-877-4335.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.