Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day

October 13, 2011

13 Facts Everyone Should Know about Metastatic Breast Cancer:

1. No one dies from breast cancer that remains in the breast. The lump itself is not what kills. The metastasis of cancerous cells to a vital organ is what kills.

2. Metastasis refers to the spread of cancer to different parts of the body, typically the bones, liver, lungs and brain.

3. An estimated 155,000 Americans are currently living with metastatic breast cancer. Metastatic breast cancer accounts for approximately 40,000 deaths annually in the U.S.

4. Treatment for metastatic breast cancer is lifelong and focuses on control and quality of life vs. curative intent. ("Treatable but unbeatable.")

5. About 6% to 10% of people are Stage IV from their initial diagnosis.

6. Early detection is not a cure. Metastatic breast cancer can occur ANY time after a person's original diagnosis, EVEN if the patient was initially Stage 0, I, II or III and DESPITE getting annual checkups and annual mammograms.

7. Between 20% to 30% of people initially diagnosed with regional stage disease WILL develop metastatic breast cancer.

8. Young people DO get metastatic breast cancer.

9. There are many different kinds of metastatic breast cancer.

10. Treatment choices for MBC are guided by hormone (ER/PR) and HER2 receptor status, location and extent of metastasis (visceral vs. nonvisceral), previous treatment and other factors.

11. Metastatic breast cancer isn’t an automatic death sentence. Although most people will ultimately die of their disease, some can live long and productive lives.

12. There are no hard and fast prognostic statistics for metastatic breast cancer. Everyone’s situation is unique, but according to the American Cancer Society, the 5 year survival rate for stage IV is around 20%.

13. To learn more about National Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day as well as resources specifically for people with metastatic breast cancer see www.mbcn.org. We appreciate your support on October 13 and throughout the year.