

## Letter to the Editor: Metastatic Breast Cancer Patients Need to be Acknowledged

Dear Editor,

**[Timely angle]** Over the years, Breast Cancer Awareness Month has garnered much media attention, and that is to be commended. It is important to recognize this terrible disease and bring to light new information about treatments and supports for those living with it. **[Identify issue]** However, too often the messaging around breast cancer is focused solely on the “survivorship” aspect of the disease, and not on women like me, living with metastatic breast cancer. **[Personal story]** Now 54 years old, I was diagnosed with metastatic breast cancer (Stage IV) in June 2010. As someone living with metastatic breast cancer for a decade, it would be nice to recognize what survivorship looks like for others like me.

**[Insight/point of clarification]** Advocates have been calling on the Canadian government to officially declare October 13th as Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day – an opportune time to educate people on our unique journeys with this late-stage disease. Though this is not an officially recognized day, it is noted around the world and among some breast cancer patient associations in Canada.

**[Facts and statistics]** Every year, approximately 25,500 Canadians are diagnosed with breast cancer. At least three Canadian women receive their first breast cancer diagnosis of locally advanced or metastatic disease every day. Approximately 30 percent of those initially diagnosed with earlier stages of breast cancer later develop recurrent and/or metastatic disease. More awareness of this disease is certainly needed as survivorship for metastatic breast cancer patients is vastly different from survivorship for early-stage breast cancer patients.

**[Include details to show that it is an issue that affects other breast cancer patients]** The Canadian Breast Cancer Network advocates for and provides information specifically for metastatic breast cancer. Their recently published guide, ‘[Metastatic Breast Cancer Handbook: A guide for individuals living with stage IV breast cancer](#)’ provides information regarding metastatic breast

cancer, existing and upcoming treatment options and their side effects, clinical trials, and complementary therapies to relieve stress and anxiety.

**[Call-to-action/repeat the lesson or reason for letter]** I encourage all readers to visit the Canadian Breast Cancer Network's website ([www.cbcn.ca](http://www.cbcn.ca)) to educate themselves on metastatic breast cancer. **[Proposed resolution]** My hope is that as the public becomes more aware of metastatic breast cancer, Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day becomes officially recognized by Canada. **[Impact of resolution/personal connection]** Those of us living with this late-stage disease can often feel isolated from the greater breast cancer community and having this day officially recognized will help show that we are truly included in the breast cancer community.

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Kelly Slynch

[insert address and phone number at your discretion]

Vancouver, BC

778-000-0000