



# KEEPING ABREAST

Working to find the causes and stop the epidemic

MarinBreastCancerWatch

25 Bellam Boulevard, Suite 115, San Rafael, CA 94901 www.breastcancerwatch.org (415) 256-9011 Winter 2003

## MBCW Part of Effort to Secure Research Center in Bay Area

Janice Barlow

Marin Breast Cancer Watch, in collaboration with a host of other partners, is applying to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) to create the San Francisco Bay Area Breast Cancer and the Environment Research Center. The potential creation of a "Center of Excellence" in the Bay Area was announced by Dr. Kenneth Olden, Director of NIEHS, at a forum last October sponsored by MBCW and the NIEHS Berkeley Center.

In response to Dr. Olden's invitation, MBCW and a diverse group of researchers, scientists and community organizations have come together to apply for a San Francisco Bay Area Breast Cancer and the Environment Research Center. The group includes: the University of California, the San Francisco Comprehensive Cancer Center, UC Berkeley NIEHS Center, the Division of Etiology and Prevention Research, Kaiser Permanente of Northern California and advocates from the Breast Cancer Fund and the Bay View Hunters Point Health and Environmental Assessment Task Force.

The center, if funded, would become part of a network of three national research centers in which teams of scientists, clinicians and breast cancer advocates collaborate to answer the question: "How do chemical, physical, biological and social factors in the environment work together with genetic factors to cause breast cancer?"

Funding for the centers will come from The National Institute of Environment Health Sciences and the National Cancer Institute.

The proposed research for the Bay Area center will take a unique developmental approach and will focus on how environmental exposures impact on breast development over the course of a woman's lifetime, especially the period of time between onset of menarche and the first pregnancy. Such research will help define periods of susceptibility when environmental exposures and stressors may change breast development and thereby increase the risk of future breast cancer.

The NIEHS research centers will focus on two specific, defined research projects:

- The first project will use animal models to characterize breast development during early life, puberty, pregnancy, and other time points, which may show different vulnerabilities to different environmental exposures and stressors.
- The second project will conduct an epidemiological study of determinants of puberty in girls. The goal is to understand the increasing shift in early puberty among adolescent girls, to identify environmental exposures in young girls and the interplay between genetics and environmental exposures that may put them at risk of future breast cancer.

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The overall goal of the two projects is to integrate the biological, toxicological and epidemiological data on the development of the breast so that public health messages can be designed to educate girls and young women. It is hoped that this information will help researchers understand the role of specific environmental exposures and stressors in breast cancer development as well as teach women how to reduce exposure to such agents.

Marin Breast Cancer Watch is pleased to be part of this effort because the goals of projects reflect the organization's commitment to understanding potential environmental causes of breast cancer that may be preventable and modifiable.

Focusing on the role environmental exposures may play during gestation, early childhood and adolescence in the future

### Honor Thy Healer

4th Annual

Award Celebration

Thursday

March 20, 2003

11:15 a.m.

Embassy Suites Hotel

San Rafael, CA

See page 2.

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## New Directions Message from the Executive Director

Janice Marie Barlow



As the Greek philosopher Heraclitus once said, "Nothing endures but change." In 2002 Marin Breast Cancer Watch endured many changes that helped make the organization a stronger leader in working to find the causes and stop the epidemic of breast cancer.

Since 1995 MBCW has continued to make progress in determining the causes of Marin County's high breast cancer and mortality rates. Last year was particularly rewarding as we experienced unprecedented local and national media attention focused on the county because of the exceptionally high rates of breast cancer. MBCW was featured in many of these articles and broadcasts and we helped to highlight the important research being done in this field.

In addition, we made tremendous progress on our current research projects including the completion of the Adolescent Risk Factors Study and the Marin Environmental Data Study, which will be shared with the community in the very near future. We also formed many new partnerships with local and national organizations that allowed us to pursue new research initiatives and further educate our local community. And we were delighted to reach out to new people who participated in research workshops, committee meetings and attended educational forums. A big thank you to all who got involved. We are proud of the work we accomplished last year and look forward to all the opportunities and challenges ahead.

One of the most exciting developments for Marin Breast Cancer Watch is the recent hiring of Research Director Sheryl Goldberg. Sheryl will lead our new research department and all of our research efforts, allowing Marin Breast Cancer Watch to take even greater strides in conducting community-based participatory research to find the causes of breast cancer. Read all about Sheryl and her goals on page 3.

We are also delighted to welcome three new board members: Erica Heath, Gail Paradise and Christine Shadlich. All three women bring a unique perspective and set of skills that will help guide and direct our organization.

At the grassroots level, we continue to stay focused on our mission. When the increased attention and publicity about Marin's high breast cancer incidence and mortality rates over the past twelve months raised awareness in the community and nation at large, we expressed our prevailing sense of concern. We asked publicly, "Why Marin?"

Women and families in our community want to know what's next. So do we. We are committed to finding the causes and

PLEASE JOIN MARIN BREAST CANCER WATCH 'S

### HONOR THY HEALER

Fourth Annual Awards Celebration  
*Recognizing Breast Cancer Healers in Our  
Community*

Thursday, March 20, 2003  
Embassy Suites Hotel, San Rafael

Honorary Chair: Karen Neuburger,  
Lifestyle Designer

Recipient of the Francine Levien Activist Award:

William Daniels, co-owner of United Markets

Shining Star: Kathleen Clark,  
Marin Breast Cancer Council

Community Breast Cancer Research Award:

Margaret Wrensch, PhD and Georgie Farren, MD

Healing Professionals:

Alison Smith, MD

Leslie Davenport, MFT

Healing Partners:

Cheryl Lingvall

The Family of Teresa Wooton

11:15 a.m. Reception

12:15 p.m. Luncheon and Awards Program

Ticket Price: \$75. Sponsor tickets \$250 and \$500.

Tables may be purchased in honor of, or in memory of a  
loved one.

Please R.S.V.P. by March 13, 2003

For more information, please call (415) 256.9011 or  
e-mail [info@breastcancerwatch.org](mailto:info@breastcancerwatch.org)

stopping this epidemic of breast cancer and we are demanding that our public health officials and legislative representatives become committed, too.

Looking ahead, we have many exciting projects and events planned this year including new research grants, our annual *Honor Thy Healer* celebration, the second annual Dipsea Hike/Run and numerous community events and forums. It is our hope to connect and inform even more residents as we continue down the path to discovery.

Change is inevitable but we hope that you will continue to make MBCW a part of your life. As always, we thank our numerous supporters and partners. Without your help and participation, we could never be such a strong organization.

# MBCW Welcomes New Research Director

Edare Carroll

Marin Breast Cancer Watch recently made a commitment to expand its research department and play a larger role in conducting community-based research. The organization is pleased to welcome Sheryl Goldberg to the newly created part-time position of Research Director. A 14-year native of Marin County, Goldberg holds a doctoral degree from UCSF in medical sociology with a concentration in aging and health policy. She retains a master's degree in social work from Boston University in community organization, management and planning.

Goldberg also works as a research specialist for the Institute for Health and Aging at UCSF, conducting research on issues relating to long-term care policy and health, mental health and social services for the elderly.

I spoke with Sheryl recently about her research career and what sparked her interest in Marin Breast Cancer Watch.

**Your early career emphasized community-based planning and administering services to older adults. When did you start to branch out beyond this population?**

When I completed my doctoral degree I took a job with the San Francisco Commission on the Aging in an effort to apply what I'd learned in the academic environment within the local community. I worked with the Commission for six years. I was a young gerontologist and was pretty focused in my career, although I was constantly broadening how I worked. As time progressed I became interested in human service issues outside of aging. I couldn't help but notice the bigger picture.

At the same time, my mother was diagnosed with lung cancer. She was in her fifties, still a young woman and she died a few years later. I naturally started to learn more about cancer and women's health care issues. I became personally committed

to women's health care at this time. It was the mid-eighties and I was aware of the amount of attention and funding being granted to AIDS organizations and AIDS patients and how little was being granted to women with cancer.

So alongside my work with the Commission on Aging, I started to learn more about women's health issues and the importance of taking scientific literature and translating it for the community of women who could use it. I co-founded a nonprofit, the Institute on Women's Health, whose mission was to conduct, translate and disseminate applied research on women's health issues.

**So was this the real beginning of your involvement in community-based research in women's health?**

It was the beginning of my learning how to do evaluation research that is useful to a community, to the people who need it. So yes, you could say it was the beginning of my direct involvement with community-based research in women's health care. I learned how to use my research skills in a way that mattered to a lot of people who wanted to advance some social change. At the same time, I started to work with the Marin Commission on the Status of Women on the "Women's Access to Health Care" project that looked specifically at the health care needs of women in Marin County.

My career continued to open up to different populations and health care issues. I went back into the academic world after this period and worked in the UC Berkeley School of Social Welfare, continuing with my research and broadening the populations I worked with to include homeless people, women on welfare, and foster children and drug and HIV/AIDS-affected families. I was in the process of writing some grants when my sister was diagnosed with two brain tumors. That was last September. Thankfully, the tumors ended up being benign and have been

surgically removed, but all the fears and challenges that came up of dealing with a medical and health crisis were upon me again and I had to expand my vision.



**Can you say more about this?**

Well, it came to me that life and death issues and health and social justice and cleaning up the environment and the lifestyles we are living—what's working and what's not working—all affect each one of us on a very personal level. This pushed me to broaden my scope again. That's when I applied for the position with Marin Breast Cancer Watch.

It really matters to me to open my life up to the bigger picture. Professionally-speaking, breast cancer research is new to me. But the fact that Marin Breast Cancer Watch has as its mission "working to find the cause and stop the epidemic" fits with my agenda of understanding the complex interconnections of health, lifestyle and environment.

**What do you hope to accomplish during your first year?**

At this point, I'm learning as much as I can from the experts and the local advocates. Community-based research starts with the interests identified by the community. I'm presently learning what those interests are within the Marin breast cancer community. I hope to be able to make a solid contribution in developing new research. I'm also very excited about the possibility of MBCW applying to the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences to create the San Francisco Bay Area Breast Cancer and the Environment Research Center. Finally, I'd like to broaden MBCW's base of knowledge

Continued on page 4

# What is Community-Based Participatory Research?

Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR) for health is an orientation to research, not a method. It encompasses three interconnected goals: research, action and education. There is a growing momentum for CBPR as a legitimate and valued approach to studying and addressing some of the most intractable health and social problems, and MBCW is at the forefront of this effort.

The principles of community-based participatory research include:

- The problem is identified by members of the community;
- Research is participatory and engages community members and outside researchers in a collaborative that promotes co-learning;
- The project emphasizes community building and empowerment and achieves a balance between research and action.

A community-based research project:

1. Recognizes the community as a unit of identity.
2. Builds on strengths and resources within the community.
3. Facilitates collaborative, equitable partnerships in all phases of research and focuses on issues and concerns identified by community members.
4. Promotes co-learning and capacity-building among partners.
5. Integrates and achieves a balance between research and action for the mutual benefit of all partners.
6. Emphasizes the local relevance of public health problems and ecological perspectives that recognize and attend to the multiple determinants of health

and disease, including biomedical, social, economic, cultural and physical environmental factors.

7. Involves systems development through a cyclical process that involves partnership development and maintenance, community assessment, problem definition, development of research methodology, data collection and analysis, interpretation of data, determination of action and policy implications, dissemination of results, action-taking, specification of learning and establishment of mechanisms for sustainability.

8. Disseminates findings to all partners and disseminates information in language that is understandable and respectful.

9. Involves a long-term process and commitment.

#### Reference:

Minkler M, Wallerstein N, eds.

*Community-Based Participatory Research for Health, San Francisco, CA 2003: Jossey-Bass; 2003.*

## MBCW Welcomes New Research Director

*Continued from page 3*

to include all women living in Marin County, including those in diverse and underserved communities. I'd like to see women of color and low-income women involved in all aspects of the organization, including any future research that will be conducted.

*Sheryl is very interested in hearing your comments about conducting community-based research on breast cancer and environmental factors in Marin. You may contact her at her e-mail address: sheryl@breastcancerwatch.org.*

**Special Thanks to:  
Kate O'Hara, Gary Bulmer, Sig-Britt-Cox, John Pettitt, George Jackson, Diane Tedescoe and Bacchus & Venus for their holiday gathering and wine tasting which benefitted Marin Breast Cancer Watch.**

*Special thanks to Academy DeTurk for donating part of the proceeds from the play "Quilters"; John Benus for sharing proceeds from the "What's Happening Calendar 2003"; Virginia Stapleton for donating a portion of ticket sales from the "Nutcracker" and Gail Paradise for her beautiful paintings, all of which are available for purchase.*

## Wildwood Harvest Foods Supports MBCW

Drinking organic soymilk is not only a healthy food choice, it will also help fund important environmental breast cancer research conducted by Marin Breast Cancer Watch, thanks to a donation program by Wildwood Harvest Foods.

In response to the high breast cancer rates in the Bay Area, Wildwood has donated 1 percent of the proceeds from sales of Wildwood Organic Soymilk to support three breast cancer organizations including Marin Breast Cancer Watch.

"This commitment shows that businesses in this area want to be part of the solution as we look for the causes of breast cancer," said Janice Barlow, executive director of Marin Breast Cancer Watch.

Wildwood CEO Jeremiah Ridenour said his company's concern about the high breast cancer incidence rates as well as its commitment to a healthy environment prompted the donation program.

"The high rates of breast cancer in the Bay Area are a concern for all of us," Ridenour said. "As a company that believes a healthy environment is better for people in every way, we have been particularly pleased to support efforts that look at the potential environmental causes of breast cancer."

## Are We Walking, Talking Pollution Sites? Senator Boxer Listens to Community Concerns

Two recent reports have helped us learn more than we have ever known about the types and levels of toxic chemicals in the bodies of average American children and adults.

In late January, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention released its Second National Exposure Report. The first report, released in March 2001, looked for 27 environmental chemicals, including metals, pesticide metabolites, phthalate metabolites and cotinine. It raised serious questions about mercury exposure in children and phthalate exposure in women of childbearing age. This first CDC Exposure Report also revealed the positive news that exposure levels from second hand smoke had gone down.

The just released Second National Exposure Report is a much larger study and measured the exposure to 116 toxicants from these categories: metals, air pollutants, persistent and non-persistent pesticides, PCB, dioxins, furans, volatile organic compounds, nitro amines and polyaromatic hydrocarbons.

This new CDC report is the most comprehensive information available to date on the actual real-world measurements of toxic chemicals in the bodies of the American people.

Before CDC developed the biomonitoring technique on which the exposure report is based, population exposure could only be estimated by measuring air, water and soil samples. Now, the CDC is actually measuring the levels of toxic chemicals in real people's blood and urine.

A day earlier, the Environmental Working Group/Commonweal released the results of a joint project. The project is a collaboration among Mt. Sinai School of Medicine in New York, the Environmental Working Group and Commonweal.

Nine Americans, including five Bay

Marin Breast Cancer Watch joined other Bay Area organizations at the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services in January to discuss issues of concern to breast cancer advocates with U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer.

Senator Boxer called the meeting to receive an update from researchers and advocates about current research and education efforts underway in the county. In addition, the senator wanted to identify ways in which she could be helpful to groups and researchers working on the ground in the Bay Area community.

Janice Barlow, Executive Director of Marin Breast Cancer Watch, said the attention being given by federal officials is good news for Marin. "We know our elected leaders are focused on helping find out what is causing Marin's high breast cancer rate," Barlow said. "From Lynn Woolsey to Barbara Boxer, we have champions working at all levels to address Marin's breast cancer epidemic. The more people we have fighting for us, the more results we will get."

Senator Boxer pledged to fight for increased funding for Marin County breast cancer efforts as well as asking for a dedicated staff member assigned to Marin from federal health agencies. In addition, she shared ideas on how to get the federal government more involved in supplying information and resources to Marin County, including facilitating meetings and information exchanges with health agencies.

Last fall, Representative Woolsey secured a commitment from four federal agencies, the National Institutes of Health, the National Cancer Institute, the Centers for Disease Control and the Department of Health and Human Services to look at the breast cancer problem in Marin.

Marin Breast Cancer Watch will continue to work with elected officials at all levels to advocate for policies and programs that help further efforts to find the causes of breast cancer.

### MBCW To Host Gala

Marin Breast Cancer Watch will present a Gala Event on Saturday, May 10, 2003 at the fabulous Checkers Classic Auto Museum in San Rafael. The gala will be a first for MBCW and promises to be one of the social highlights of the year. Watch for details soon.

## Breast Cancer Actions 6th Annual Town Meeting

"Against the Odds: Moving from Illness to Activism" is the title of Breast Cancer Action's 6th Annual Town Meeting. The event will be held Saturday, April 26, from noon to 5:00 p.m. at the Oakland Asian Cultural Center, 388 Ninth Street in Oakland. There is no charge, but donations are encouraged. The event will feature workshops, speeches and a dedication ceremony. For more information or to reserve your space call 510/532-7700.

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# Donations to Marin Breast Cancer Watch

*The following donations were received between August 8, 2002 and January 15, 2003.*

|                                    |   |                                   |
|------------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| Cecilia Abbott                     | Ingrid Demarta                            | Susan Khaury                      |
| Polly Allen                        | Toni and Alan Denmark                     | Dolores Kilgariff                 |
| Deborah and Roger Alstad           | Victoria DeWitt                           | Evelyn Kim                        |
| Marisela Alvarez                   | Eva Diamond                               | Remmy Kingsley                    |
| Lillie and Peter Anderson          | Bernadette and Bill Dowd                  | John and Robyn Klapperich         |
| Shelley Anderson                   | Mary Dowling                              | Thomas Kolenberg                  |
| Laura Armor                        | Jean Drake                                | Konsortium 1                      |
| Bacchus & Venus, Marcy Roth        | Sandra Eben                               | Kresge Foundation                 |
| Janice and Steve Barlow            | Heather Emge                              | Isabel and Richard Lamerdin       |
| Janet Bell                         | Gail and Donald Enos                      | Suellen Lamorte                   |
| Robert Bennett                     | Cecile Erickson                           | Joan Lamphier                     |
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| Brenda Bercun MSN                  | Three Bags Full                           | Nancy Lee                         |
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| Patty Bradford                     | Richard and Linda Fowler                  | Lucasfilm                         |
| Candie and Brian Brady             | Friends & Foundation of the San Francisco | Cheryl Maglosky and Thadd Bringas |
| Gwen Brandes                       | Public Library                            | Marin Association of Realtors     |
| Eric and Eri Brevig                | Margot and David Geitheim                 | Marin Independent Journal,        |
| Dan and Arlene Brown               | Jason Geller and Lisa Borah               | Roger Grossman                    |
| Betsy W. Bryant-Lane               | Joseph Gibbs and Robyn Chew-Gibbs         | Marin Nexus                       |
| Celeste Burton                     | Alyssa and Gary Gleason                   | Patricia Ann Martin               |
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| Tessa and Fred Cherniss            | Kelly and Mark Hanley                     | Judy and Mark Mesinger            |
| Diana Chiarabano                   | Annemarie and Rolf Hellman                | Thomas Miller                     |
| Cindy and Daniel Clark             | Michelle Hennessy                         | Mindjet                           |
| Barry and Coral Cogbill            | Lorraine Herrin                           | Elin Modjeska                     |
| Kathleen Colloton                  | Katharine Hoff                            | Rosalie Morosin                   |
| Communication Workers of America-  | Edward Hoffman                            | Margaret Moster                   |
| Local 9404                         | Greg Holcomb                              | Donna Motluck and Stuart Bewley   |
| Terry and Kellie Contrucci         | Greg Holcomb                              | Helene Mullin                     |
| Joan Corbett                       | Gudrun Hommer                             | Stacey Musser                     |
| Elizabeth Corbitt                  | Donald and Virginia Humphreys             | John and Anita Naylor             |
| Kevin and Mary Curry               | Doreen Ishtam                             | Dr Rebecca Nystrom                |
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| Pat and John Dean                  | Barbara Johnson                           | Kathleen O'Hara                   |
| Laurie Dederian                    | Jeanne Johnson                            | Onas International                |
| Allyson Delgado                    | Peggy Katcher                             | Haden and Marie Ongaro            |
|                                    | Cessna and Doug Kaye                      |                                   |

*Donations continued from page 10*

Paul O'Rear  
Wendy Pagnone  
Robert and Gwen Palacios  
Gail Paradise  
Lenore and James Parisi  
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Cindy Perris  
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Anne and Marshall Richman  
Constance and Richard Rider  
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John and Jary Dailey  
Paul and Ginger Gradeff  
Frank and Maureen Kovacs  
Doug and Jill McIntosh  
Stuart and Patricia L. Mcintosh  
Stephen Mittel  
Barry and Lizanne Rosenstein  
Swan Dive

**Carol Rumsey's 50 Mile Walk:**

Laurie Anderson  
Joyce Asmussen  
Janice and Steve Barlow  
Carol Benz  
Lynn Braverman  
Susan Cane  
Earl Constantine  
Donna Cotter  
Elizabeth Coyle  
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Christopher Dougherty  
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Allison French  
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*Continued on newsletter insert page*

**Mission Statement**

*Marin Breast Cancer Watch is a grassroots organization dedicated to finding the causes and stopping the epidemic of breast cancer.*

*We accomplish our mission through community-based research, education and public policy advocacy with a focus on creating a healthy environment.*

**Founder:**

Francine Levien

**Board Members:**

Roni Peskin Mentzer, President;  
Fern Orenstein and Erica Heath,  
Co-Vice Presidents; Linda Spence,  
Secretary; Katie Beacock, Flavia Belli,  
Gail Paradise, Christine Shadlich,  
Joanne Williams and Barry Zack.

**MBCW Staff:**

Janice Barlow: Executive Director  
Tom Scott: Communications Director  
Sheryl Goldberg, Research Director  
Colin Leary: Research Assistant  
Adrienne York: Administrative  
Assistant

**Newsletter Staff:**

Edare Carroll, Editor; Cynthia Hardin,  
Assistant Editor.

[info@breastcancerwatch.org](mailto:info@breastcancerwatch.org);  
[www.breastcancerwatch.org](http://www.breastcancerwatch.org)

## **Are We Walking, Talking Pollution Sites?**

*Continued from page 5*

Area residents, were tested for 210 chemicals found in consumer products and industrial pollution. On average the tests found in each subject:

- 53 chemicals linked to cancer in humans and lab animals;
- 62 that are toxic to the brain and nervous system;
- 58 chemicals that interfere with the hormone system;
- 55 chemicals associated with birth defects or abnormal development;
- 55 chemicals toxic to the reproductive system;
- 53 chemicals toxic to the immune system; and
- 55 chemicals for which there is no health information available.

This increase in what we know should lead to an increase in what we do about toxic exposure. We encourage you to review the reports that are available on [www.envirohealthaction.org](http://www.envirohealthaction.org), [www.cdc.gov/nceh/dls](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/dls), and [www.ewg.org/reports/bodyburden/](http://www.ewg.org/reports/bodyburden/).

**Mark Your Calendars Now  
for the 2nd Annual Dipsea  
Hike and Run  
Saturday, July 19, 2003  
in memory of Annie Fox  
and benefiting MBCW**

## **MBCW Tries to Secure Research Center in Bay Area**

*Continued from page 1*

development of breast cancer is critical if we are going to turn breast cancer incidence and mortality rates upside down for the next generation of women.

Marin Breast Cancer Watch will serve as Director of the Community Outreach and Translation Core (COTC) and will assist with the development of partnerships among Bay Area community representatives and the center's research scientists.

In keeping with its mission of promoting a community-based, participatory research approach to breast cancer research, MBCW will also ensure that community members participate in all aspects of the research process, including planning, development of methodology, implementation and dissemination of research findings. This level of participation will guarantee that the COTC community co-investigators are intimately involved with the process and sharing the concerns of community members.

In addition, COTC community co-investigators will clearly understand the center's research projects and will be better able to transfer relevant information to the public and to policymakers.

An announcement about which Centers of Excellence will be funded is expected in July. The process is competitive and not guaranteed for the Bay Area.

*Please make sure your annual subscription is up to date (\$35). If you no longer wish to receive "Keeping Abreast" let us know and we will remove you from our mailing list. We want to make sure that all donations to Marin Breast Cancer Watch go toward our educational & research programs, not to unnecessary printing or postage. Email [info@breastcancerwatch.org](mailto:info@breastcancerwatch.org) to be removed from the newsletter mailing list.*



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