

**BREAST CANCER EARLY DETECTION  
AWARENESS AND EDUCATION**

*Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1988  
Reviewed and deemed relevant November 2017*

- WHEREAS,** PTA recognizes the home as the foundation of our society and has promoted parent education since its inception; and
- WHEREAS,** PTA continues to direct its efforts against threats to the health and quality of life of children and their families through parent education programs and the support of the health education curricula in our schools; and
- WHEREAS,** One out of every 10 women will develop breast cancer at some time during her life and the incidence of breast cancer in our country is increasing; and
- WHEREAS,** The best hope for recovery lies in early treatment which in turn is made possible by early detection and diagnosis; and
- WHEREAS,** There is general agreement that the earlier breast cancers are detected and treated, the greater the likelihood that more women will be cured; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts promote education and awareness programs in cooperation with their respective local branches of the American Cancer Society, National Cancer Institute or local health departments; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts encourage parent education programs recognizing the importance of early warning signs and detection and treatment through meetings, study groups, speakers, films and pamphlets; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA encourage its units, councils and districts to urge their local schools to include breast cancer education in the curricula of the health education classes as knowledge and action make the difference; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA forward this resolution to the National PTA for consideration by the delegates at the National PTA Convention in 1988.

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*Continued on next page*

## BACKGROUND SUMMARY

According to the American Cancer Society's educational pamphlet on Mammography, an X-ray of the breast using specially coated film or paper, **every 15 minutes three women develop breast cancer and one woman dies of breast cancer**, (1982 statistics).

Mammography has become vital to the earlier diagnosis of breast cancer. It can detect extremely small breast cancers – ones that have usually not spread to regional lymph nodes. The earlier breast cancer is discovered, and the smaller it is at the time of discovery, the better the chance for cure. Such small cancers have a very high cure rate.

The American Cancer Society (ACS) has long advocated the teaching of breast self-examination, and recommends that such examinations become a part of every woman's health routine by the age of twenty. The Society and PTA agree that teaching self-examination should be part of the health education curriculum (see *PTA Today*, Dec. 1987-Jan. 1988). It is important to know what is normal so that if a change does occur it is easily detected.

ACS also urges educating women about mammography which can detect cancers too small to be felt by the most experienced examiner. The Society recommends a yearly mammography for all women 50 and over, a mammography every 1-2 years for women 40-49 and a "baseline" mammography for women 35-39. A physical examination by an experienced professional, at least every three years, is recommended for all women from age 20 to 40, and every year for those over 40. If breast cancer is found early enough, the survival rate approaches 100%.

Breast self-examination, professional physical examination and mammography are the chief weapons in the fight to decrease the breast cancer mortality rate.