

NCI Breast Cancer Researcher: Redesign Clinical Trials To Test Therapies To Prevent Metastasis

Metastatic Breast Cancer Network (MBCN) presented Dr. Patricia Steeg with the Ellen Moskowitz and Suzanne Hebert Leadership Grant Award during a patient-centric conference held on National Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day in Chicago on Oct. 13.

Oct. 22, 2012 - [PRLog](#) -- METASTATIC BREAST CANCER NETWORK PRESENTS NCI'S DR. PATRICIA STEEG WITH THE ELLEN MOSKOWITZ AND SUZANNE HEBERT LEADERSHIP GRANT AWARD

NEW YORK—OCT. 22, 2012—As hundreds of metastatic breast cancer patients offered a standing ovation, the Metastatic Breast Cancer Network (MBCN) presented Dr. Patricia Steeg with the Ellen Moskowitz and Suzanne Hebert Leadership Grant Award. The award was given at MBCN's 6th Annual National Conference which took place Oct. 13, 2012 at Northwestern's Lurie Cancer Center in Chicago.

“For the last 20 years, in her laboratory at the National Cancer Institute, in Bethesda, Maryland, Dr. Patricia Steeg has been researching how cancer cells from the primary tumor in the breast travel to vital organs, in particular the brain,” said Shirley Mertz, MBCN board member and prominent patient advocate. “Dr. Steeg identified the first cancer suppressor gene and has done pioneering work on brain metastasis. Although metastatic research is difficult and involves long and complex experiments, Dr. Steeg remains undeterred. She exerts strong leadership in the research community nationally and internationally.”

The award—which includes a monetary grant to be used for metastatic research—is named after MBCN's former President, Ellen Moskowitz, and former Vice-President, Suzanne Hebert. “Ellen and Suzanne worked side by side for five years to establish MBCN as the voice of people living with metastatic breast cancer,” said Mertz. “Together, they pushed for change and inspired many to take action to promote awareness and provide education for metastatic breast cancer patients and professionals alike.”

The MBCN board wanted to honor these remarkable women by recognizing a scientist and researcher whose persistent leadership and work embodies what Ellen and Suzanne fought for—research about metastatic disease that could result in treatments to extend the lives of metastatic breast cancer patients.

Mertz presented the award to Steeg “with great appreciation and anticipation for the future...along with our deep thanks for your dedication and persistence in metastasis research.”

Prior to accepting the award, Steeg gave a presentation on “Research on Treatment to Contain Metastatic Growth.” The researcher made a case for redesigning clinical trials to do what she termed “phase II randomized metastasis-prevention trials.” Currently, phase I and phase II clinical trials are done in patients with advanced, refractory metastatic cancer, patients who have had many therapies. In phase II trials, researchers typically are trying to determine if a drug shrinks metastases.

“But a drug that *prevents* metastasis may not *shrink* a large, refractory tumor,” said Steeg. “It has a different mechanism of action that is not picked up by the clinical trial system.” (Steeg referenced a perspective piece, “The Right Trials,” she wrote for *Nature* (http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v485/n7400_supp/full/485S58a.html) this past May: http://www.nature.com/nature/journal/v485/n7400_supp/full/485S58a.html)

Conference chair and MBCN board member Deb Tincher noted that many attendees cited Steeg as their favorite speaker at the 2012 event. “One person described Dr. Steeg as ‘spectacular and passionate’ and we

certainly agree,” Tincher said. “We also agreed with the rest of her comment: ‘Dr. Steeg is in the trenches helping us and it showed!’ We are proud to recognize and support Dr. Steeg’s work.”

ABOUT MBCN’s ANNUAL CONFERENCE

MBCN held its first conference at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in 2006. Subsequent conferences have been held at M.D. Anderson, Dana-Farber, Indiana University’s Simon Cancer Center and at Johns Hopkins.

ABOUT THE METASTATIC BREAST CANCER NETWORK

MBCN is a national, independent, nonprofit, patient advocacy group dedicated to the unique concerns of the women and men living with metastatic breast cancer. MBCN was founded in 2004 by Jane Soyer and Nina Schulman. When diagnosed with advanced breast cancer, they experienced feelings of isolation from the very groups established to provide support. They felt the stigma of being a “failure” in the breast cancer community. Their belief that cancer cannot be viewed as a disease from which one is either a “survivor” or to which one has succumbed, fueled their desire to advocate for change. See www.mbcn.org.

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Captions

Photo 1: MBCN board member Shirley Mertz (left) presented NCI’s Pat Steeg with the Ellen Moskowitz and Suzanne Hebert Leadership Grant Award at the Oct. 13, 2012 conference for metastatic breast cancer patients. *Photo credit: Ellen Schor*

Photo 2: “I’m glad Dr. Steeg is on our side!” said one metastatic breast cancer patient at the 6th Annual MBCN Conference. The Metastatic Breast Cancer Network (MBCN) presented Steeg with The Ellen Moskowitz and Suzanne Hebert Leadership Grant Award at the Oct. 13 conference held in Chicago. *Photo credit: Ellen Schor*

Photo 3: More than 200 people with metastatic breast cancer and their supporters came to Chicago for the 2012 National Metastatic Breast Cancer Conference held on Oct. 13th, National Metastatic Breast Cancer Awareness Day. *Photo credit: Ellen Schor*

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