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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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May 28, 2025
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Breast Cancer Screening Bill Receives Senate Hearing

Madison, WI – Today the Senate Committee on Health held a public hearing on SB 264, also known as “Gail’s Law.” Introduced by Representatives Cindi Duchow (R – Delafield) and Amanda Nedweski (R – Pleasant Prairie) and Senator Rachael Cabral-Guevara (R – Appleton), SB 264 requires health insurance providers to cover diagnostic screenings for breast cancer in women with dense breast tissue. At 47, Gail Zeamer received a delayed diagnosis of Stage IIIC breast cancer one week after her yearly mammogram. Gail had dense breast tissue, which made mammograms an insufficient tool at detecting abnormalities. Up until her passing, she advocated tirelessly for increased education about dense breast tissue, and worked with the legislature to require health insurers to cover supplemental diagnostic screenings such as MRIs and ultrasounds.

Prior to the hearing, a press conference was held where the legislators, joined by advocates from around the state, explained the purpose of the bill and shared personal stories about the positive impact that SB 264 will have. Rep. Duchow addressed the importance of early detection in her remarks.

“Early detection is key to successful treatment. Cancer is easier to treat and outcomes are better when diagnosed at an early stage. A diagnosis at Stage I might require three or four rounds of chemotherapy compared to eight or nine rounds at Stage III. This impacts not only health but quality of life. The sooner a patient can be treated and enter remission, the sooner they can return to their normal life. Early detection and treatment also result in fewer cases where the cancer returns. For the 40% of women, like Gail, with dense breast tissue, routine mammograms are not sufficient to detect cancer during at an early stage. SB 264 gives women who are at an increased risk of a missed diagnosis the resources they need to ensure cancer is detected at the earliest possible stage.”

SB 264 awaits an executive session in the Senate Committee on Health and the Assembly companion bill, AB 263, is expected to receive a hearing later this session.

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Rep. Duchow represents the 97th Assembly District, which includes the villages of Dousman, Eagle, North Prairie, Oconomowoc, Palmyra, Sullivan, Summit, and Wales; the towns of Concord, Delafield, Eagle, Genesee, Hebron, Mukwonago, Ottawa, Palmyra, and Sullivan; and the City of Delafield.