



Canadian Breast Cancer Network
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Canadian Breast Cancer Network mBC Access Matters Video Transcripts

Mary Lou Robertson (Drug Access Navigator)

Picture this. You're sitting in the oncologist's office. It's been weeks of tests, scans, questions, and worries. The oncologist comes in the room and starts to talk about the treatment that you're going to go on. You know your cancer has spread but this drug will give you some quality of life, reduce your pain, and give you more time. So you listen to everything the oncologist is going over about this drug and you ask your questions. And then just as the appointment's about to end the oncologist says "and do you have insurance?" This happens multiple times a day, in cancer clinics right across this country, for a variety of reasons. Sometimes the drug is new on the market and it hasn't been covered yet because, well, we have longer waits now for many of the drugs that are out there.

But sometimes it happens because even once it's approved, there aren't the mechanisms in that province to ensure that patient can get the drug in a timely manner without any burden out of pocket to them. Because for many patients, the burden falls to them.

My name is Mary Lou Robertson, and I'm a social worker specializing in drug access navigation. It used to be my job to come in after that insurance question was asked, and work with that patient to help figure out how we were going to get that drug funded. It shouldn't happen. There are drug access navigators now right across this country helping patients every day – by the thousands.

We need some consistency around cancer drug coverage. We need an acceptable level of how long they're supposed to wait for new cancer treatments. And we need some standards about how they're supposed to access that drug once it's listed.

Please join me and others in signing the MBC Access Matters petition so we can support women across Canada in accessing the treatment they need. Thank you.