

NOMINATION FORM

2014 ANNUAL NCWBA PUBLIC SERVICE AND OUTSTANDING MEMBER PROGRAM AWARDS

Name of your organization's project: Overcoming Cancer's Legal Challenges

Please indicate whether your submission is for the Public Service Award or Outstanding Member Program Award: Public Service Award

Name of sponsoring women's bar association: New Hampshire Women's Bar Association

Name of Sponsoring Organization's contact person: Gretchen E. Pyles,
Esquire, Executive Director

E-mail address: Gretchen@nhwba.org

Telephone No: (603) 801-0660

Number of members: 220+

Name of contact person for purposes of award notification: Gretchen E. Pyles,
Esquire, Executive Director

E-mail address: Gretchen@nhwba.org

Telephone No.: (603) 801-0660

PLEASE MAKE SURE TO NOTIFY THE NCWBA OF ANY CHANGE IN YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION AFTER SUBMISSION OF YOUR AWARD APPLICATION TO ENSURE YOU RECEIVE TIMELY NOTIFICATION REGARDING WHETHER YOU HAVE BEEN SELECTED TO RECEIVE AN AWARD.

The nomination materials should be e-mailed to be received no later than Friday, January 31, 2014: Awards Chair Wendy Weigler, E-mail:

awards@ncwba.org

Description of Project

“Overcoming Cancer’s Legal Challenges” is a collaboration of the New Hampshire Women’s Bar Association (“NHWBA”) and the Elliot Regional Cancer Center (“Cancer Center”). A support group at the Cancer Center called “Living Beyond Breast Cancer” meets on the second Wednesday of every month from 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. Many patients and survivors attending these meetings have questions about how their treatment and recovery will affect them and their families from a legal perspective. They have questions about their ability to continue working or to obtain a new job. Often the support group attendees ask whether they should tell their employers that they have cancer, what accommodations they are entitled to under the law, and whether they can be charged more for insurance, among other questions. Therefore, the NHWBA has partnered with the Cancer Center to offer informational sessions on “Overcoming Cancer’s Legal Challenges.” Here, the patients and survivors meet with attorneys from the NHWBA to learn about their legal rights.

The NHWBA was formed in 1998 to promote and support the advancement and interests of women in the legal community through leadership, professional interaction, education and the exchange of ideas between our members and the community. In furtherance of our mission, we offer our members opportunities for personal and professional growth through networking and professional development forums, continuing legal education seminars, and public service initiatives that focus on improving the lives of women and children in New Hampshire. With over 220 members, our organization includes attorneys in all areas of law, judges, educators, government officials and law students from across the state. We strive to make a difference in the lives of our members, but also of those in the larger community.

The Living Beyond Breast Cancer Support Group at the Elliot Cancer Center was created in 2001 in order to support women after diagnosis and treatment for breast cancer. The group is one of only a few in the State of New Hampshire that addresses the needs of breast cancer survivors and acknowledges the ongoing issues they face.

Narrative

On March 13, 2013, the NHWBA met with the Living Beyond Breast Cancer support group at the Elliot Cancer Center and provided an overview of laws pertinent to women diagnosed with breast cancer. The NHWBA answered the attendees' questions, which ranged from questions about cancer in the workplace to the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA"). Written materials were provided to the attendees addressing their questions. Topics that were discussed included: (1) may an employer ask a job applicant whether he or she has or has had cancer or about her treatment prior to making a job offer, (2) does the ADA require an applicant to disclose that she has or has had cancer or some other disability before accepting a job offer, (3) when may an employer ask an employee if cancer, or some other medical condition, may be causing her performance problems, (4) may an employer tell employees who ask why their co-worker is allowed to do something that generally is not permitted (such as work at home or take periodic rest breaks) that she is receiving a reasonable accommodation, and (5) what other types of reasonable accommodations may employees with cancer need. Other issues were also addressed including questions pertaining to family law matters and future changes in insurance coverage laws. In addition to providing legal counsel, the NHWBA also sought to provide emotional support for the cancer patients and survivors and their families.

As a follow up to the March 13, 2013 meeting, the NHWBA then met with the Cancer Center's Social Work Oncology Group on May 21, 2013. Similar topics were addressed to help educate the social workers about the laws that affect their patients.

The "Overcoming Cancer's Legal Challenges" program is ongoing and NHWBA members will be meeting with the Cancer Center's support group again this spring.

Other women's bar associations could participate in similar programs in their communities by contacting local hospitals and cancer centers to see if cancer support groups would be interested in partnering with them to help cancer patients learn more about their legal rights.

Appendix

Letter of Support from Christine Howard, LICSW, OSW-C,
Oncology Resource Coordinator, Elliot Regional Cancer Center