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**Peconic Bay Medical Center Launches Breast Cancer Support Group**

**In Partnership with North Fork Breast Health Coalition**

RIVERHEAD, NY – [Peconic Bay Medical Center](http://www.pbmchealth.org) will launch a Breast Cancer Support Network in collaboration with the [North Fork Breast Health Coalition](https://www.northforkbreasthealth.org/) in early May. The program will offer both in-person and virtual resources to the community and will focus on patients who are 18 months from diagnosis of breast cancer and those with metastatic breast cancer, with hopes to expand in the future.

The support network will be facilitated by the [Cancer Services Program of Suffolk County](https://www.pbmchealth.org/care-centers-services/services/cancer-services), a program of Peconic Bay Medical Center. The program provides breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screenings, and diagnostic services at no cost to adults who live in New York State, do not have health insurance, have health insurance with a cost-share that makes the cost of screening too high, and meet the program rules for age and income.

*“As the regional medical center for eastern Suffolk County, our neighbors count on us to offer the best resources for everything related to their wellness,” says Maureen O’Connor, director of the Cancer Services Program at Peconic Bay Medical Center. “Providing support beyond treatment is fundamental to those who are fighting and surviving breast cancer. Expanding our capabilities to serve our patients is at the core of everything we do. We are honored to offer this free service with the help of the NFBHC to the women of our community.”*

Women with breast cancer need support now more than ever. The COVID-19 pandemic has created unprecedented emotional challenges for women with breast cancer, including disruptions to screening and treatments, financial hardship and increased anxiety and isolation. The women of the East End are uniquely vulnerable because of the limited access to healthcare, geographic isolation and unreliable transportation options.

*“We have all been touched and impacted by breast cancer. The North Fork Breast Health Coalition is keenly aware of how important emotional support is for those individuals who have been diagnosed with breast cancer,” said Susan Ruffini, president of North Fork Breast Health Coalition. “This support group will make sure that no one diagnosed with breast cancer walks alone.”*

For more information about this support group, please contact Maureen O’Connor, Director of Cancer Services Program of Suffolk County at Peconic Bay Medical Center, at 631-548-6320, extension 1400, or [moconnor10@northwell.edu](mailto:moconnor10@northwell.edu).

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***About Peconic Bay Medical Center***

*Located in Riverhead, NY, Peconic Bay Medical Center is a 200-bed nonprofit hospital committed to providing exceptional care and improving the health of the communities it serves. Peconic Bay Medical Center offers wide-ranging, full-scope services and programs, including advanced surgical, cardiac, orthopedic and women’s health care, comprehensive inpatient medical care, palliative care and an extensive range of outpatient services, along with state-of-art technology. Peconic Bay Medical Center joined Northwell Health in 2016. For more information, visit* [*PBMCHealth.org*](http://www.pbmchealth.org)*.*

***About North Fork Breast Health Coalition***

*The North Fork Breast Health Coalition is currently led by President Susan Ruffini. The all-volunteer, nonprofit organization supports local breast-cancer patients with programs such as Helping Hand grants. The group also provides free services such as gentle yoga, reflexology, meditation class and massage therapy to breast cancer patients and survivors. Ann Cotten-DeGrasse and her late husband, Antonio, founded NFBHC in 1998 because they saw a great need for such an organization on the North Fork, where there is an especially high rate of diagnosis of the disease. For further information, call 631-208-8889, e-mail* [*nfbreasthealth@gmail.com*](file:///C:\Users\vpalacio1\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Word\nfbreasthealth@gmail.com) *or visit* [*www.northforkbreasthealth.org*](file:///C:\Users\vpalacio1\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Word\www.northforkbreasthealth.org)*.*