



Breast Reconstruction Education for Cancer Patients

Dr. Allen Gabriel, MD, FACS

Breast Cancer by the Numbers

- **246,660** new cases in 2016
- **1 in 8 women** are diagnosed with breast cancer
- African American women under age 40 **highest incidence**
- **Most common** cancer among Latino patients

Background

The Women's Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998 (WHCRA)

- Requires health plans that offer breast cancer coverage to also provide for breast reconstruction and prostheses.

The Breast Cancer Patient Education Act of 2015 (New Jersey)

- Requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to plan and implement an education campaign to inform breast cancer patients of the availability and coverage of breast reconstruction and other options.

Yet nearly 70% of women are not informed of their options.

Knowing Options through Education

- Educational materials should inform women that breast reconstruction is possible at the time of breast cancer surgery, it may be delayed until after other treatments, or they may choose not to have reconstruction.
 - To also be informed of the **availability of prostheses or breast forms.**
- Educational materials should inform breast cancer patients that **federal law mandates** coverage of breast reconstruction, even if such reconstruction is delayed after other treatments.

Quality of Life

Emotional journey

Physical change

Mental challenge

A disease with a life long impact on the patient and their family and friends.