

August 5, 2008 - Murtha Views State-of-the-Art High Density Breast MRI at Windber Medical Center

WASHINGTON, D.C. -- Congressman John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, today visited the Joyce Murtha Breast Care Center at Windber Medical Center to discuss their successful WomanCare Program and to view a demonstration of their new state-of-the-art breast MRI unit.

Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed non-skin cancer in women, and one out of every eight women will develop breast cancer in her lifetime. In 2008, over 182,000 women in the United States will receive a diagnosis of invasive breast cancer and over 67,000 will be diagnosed with breast cancer in situ (non-invasive cancer). While rare, more than 1,900 new cases of male breast cancer will also be diagnosed this year. Currently, breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in women, and approximately 40,000 women and 450 men are projected to die from the cancer this year.

With these statistics in mind, Congressman Murtha was instrumental in creating the Department of Defense Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP) in the early 1990s. Since 1992, he has secured nearly \$2.2 billion for breast cancer research through the CDMRP, and this funding has awarded grants to over 5,000 breast cancer research programs.

As part of a comprehensive program in conjunction with the Walter Reed Army Medical Center, the Joyce Murtha Breast Care Center will create a Risk Reduction Clinic designed to identify, counsel, and manage women who are at high risk at developing breast cancer.

In addition to providing patients with individualized treatments, the Joyce Murtha Breast Care Center has purchased a 3.0-Tesla (3T) MRI unit, allowing doctors to create MRI images with extreme detail and clarity. The 3T MRI unit can identify breast abnormalities while they are still too small to be seen by other diagnostic methods, and provides twice the strength and speed of existing MRI imaging equipment. The Joyce Murtha Breast Care Center has the only 3T MRI unit in Western Pennsylvania.

Since opening in 2002, the Joyce Murtha Breast Care Center has provided a full range of diagnostic and treatment services related to breast health and disease. In 2007, they were able to provide 11,500 mammograms, 2,500 ultrasound diagnostics and 800 bone density scans for women and men from across our region.

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