

During Breast Cancer Awareness Month, Duckworth, Murkowski Reintroduce Bipartisan Bill to Expand Medicare Coverage for Breast Cancer Patients

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senators Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) re-introduced legislation to ensure breast cancer patients and survivors who have experienced a mastectomy are able to access custom breast prosthetics under Medicare. The *Breast Cancer Patient Equity Act* would provide coverage for custom fabricated breast prostheses—which, unlike other prosthetic devices, are not currently covered by Medicare—to the more than 100,000 women who undergo mastectomies annually.

“We can do so much more to help patients and survivors of breast cancer fully recover and achieve the best quality of life,” said Senator Duckworth. “It is absurd that the breast is the only human body part not currently covered by Medicare as a customized replacement, which is one of the reasons why I’m proud to reintroduce this legislation with Senator Murkowski to finally change that and help expand access and options for women who have already been through so much.”

“Battling breast cancer is a traumatizing experience for the many women who go through it—and right now, many who undergo mastectomies have poor choices when it comes to reconstructive surgeries. That’s why I’m proud to join Senator Duckworth on the Breast Cancer Patient Equity Act, which would provide more choices for women who undergo mastectomies,” said Senator Murkowski. “This bill will not just expand coverage under Medicare for thousands of women, but it will also aid in the emotional and physical healing for women who battled breast cancer.”

A copy of the bill text is available [here](#).

For most women, a flat-backed, off-the-shelf breast prosthesis will be suitable and fit well. However, after mastectomy surgery, not all women will have a flat chest wall to allow a good fit for off-the-shelf prosthesis. Further, it can be difficult for some women, particularly women of color, to find prostheses that match their skin tone.

In recent years, technological advancements have enabled the creation and precise fitting of custom breast prostheses. Custom prostheses are typically made from higher-end silicone products produced in a unique mold designed to fit the chest like a puzzle piece. Through laser scans of the chest, which may have bumps, scarring or dips due to surgery, many women find that custom breast prostheses provide a superior fit and comfort. Unfortunately, these patients and survivors may struggle to access custom breast prostheses due to lack of coverage.

Senator Duckworth has always made expanding women’s healthcare a priority. Earlier this year, Duckworth [introduced](#) bipartisan legislation to expand and protect federal employees’ access to in-vitro fertilization (IVF) and other assisted reproductive

technology (ART) that millions of Americans need to have children. Duckworth also [reintroduced](#) the *Equal Access to Abortion Coverage in Health Insurance (EACH) Act*, a bicameral bill that would help guarantee abortion coverage—without restrictions—for millions of Americans. Additionally, she [helped introduce](#) the *Women’s Health Protection Act of 2023*, legislation to guarantee access to abortion everywhere across the country and restore the right to comprehensive reproductive healthcare for millions of Americans.