



# CARRIE'S TOUCH



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ADVOCACY + AWARENESS + EDUCATION + RESEARCH + SUPPORT

May 31, 2022

Jill Biden, Ed.D.  
First Lady of the United States  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Dr. Biden,

Approximately **10 million Americans** currently suffer from osteoporosis (bone disease) and another **44 million** have low bone mass, putting them at increased risk of osteoporotic fractures. Women are impacted more than men due to loss of estrogen at menopause, but every gender, race, and socioeconomic group is susceptible to this debilitating bone disease. At Carrie's TOUCH, our mission is to break the silence that surrounds Black women and breast cancer – silence that has led to Black women dying at much higher rates than any other racial or ethnic group. We hope to see more Black women not only beat their breast cancer diagnosis, but to live well through survivorship. However, the journey doesn't end once cancer free. The toll that breast cancer treatment has on our bones begins a new battle, placing us at a particularly high risk for osteoporosis and fracture.

With May 2022 being National Osteoporosis Awareness and Prevention Month, the undersigned organizations are hoping you will do a tremendous public service and greatly help our efforts to educate Americans about their bone health simply by getting a bone density test (DXA) and/or speaking about this as a part of your preventive health regimen. As First Lady, you have the power to influence millions of Americans who may not be aware of just how important bone health and osteoporosis screening are to living an independent and active lifestyle as we age.

A recent study commissioned by the Bone Health & Osteoporosis Foundation, revealed that up to 2.3 million osteoporotic bone fractures were suffered by approximately 2 million Medicare beneficiaries in 2016. ***That is more than the number of heart attacks, strokes, or new cancer cases that same year.*** The total annual cost for osteoporotic fractures among Medicare beneficiaries was \$57 billion in 2018 and is expected to grow to more than \$95 billion in 2040, as the population ages. If we are able to reduce just 20% of secondary (repeat) fractures, it would save Medicare up to \$1.1 billion dollars in addition to preventing the human toll of these fractures.

The good news is that we know how to prevent these fractures. Medicare pays for high-quality bone density testing to identify those who are at risk of bone fractures, allowing for early and effective preventive steps and interventions. However, only 8% of those who suffer fractures are screened within 6 months and for Black Americans that screening rate is just 4%. Medicare also pays for FDA-approved drug treatments for osteoporosis that can help reduce spine and hip fractures by up to 70% and cut subsequent fractures by about half. But about 80% go untreated, even after a fracture. This is a public health issue and a growing women's health crisis that doesn't receive the attention it should. With your

support, we can help prevent costly fractures and ensure more Americans understand the critical importance of bone health.

Thank you for considering our request and we stand ready to answer any questions you may have. Please feel free to have your staff contact me at any time. I can be reached at (916) 470-1846 or [tdenyse@carriestouch.org](mailto:tdenyse@carriestouch.org).

Sincerely,

Reverend Tammie Denyse  
Co-Founder & President,  
Carrie's TOUCH



Courtney Quinn  
Executive Director,  
Albie Aware Breast Cancer Foundation



Binh Tran, PharmD, MS, MBA  
Program Director,  
Asian Pacific Health Foundation



Rina Bello  
Executive Director,  
Bay Area Cancer Connections



Rhonda Smith  
Executive Director,  
California Black Health Network



Deborah Martin  
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Scott Suckow  
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Liver Coalition of San Diego



Colleen Henderson  
President,  
Patient Advocates United



Scott Suckow  
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Paul Downey  
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