

1. How is the nominee a leader in the areas of promoting access to health care for uninsured or underserved people and/or in improving the health of people in Maine? Please list some of the nominee's contributions to their organization and the greater community. (Nominees who are not leaders in promoting access to care for uninsured or underserved Maine people will not be considered.) (6 pts)

Robin Long may not be a well-known name throughout the State of Maine, but it should be. One of Robin's greatest attributes is her commitment to others who are disadvantaged as a result of their status – financial, gender, sexuality, or ability. A life-long Mainer (except for her undergraduate years), Robin is devoted to creating the best health possible for all the people of Maine.

In 1996, Caring Connections, a cooperative program between the Bangor YWCA (now the Bangor Region YMCA) and Eastern Maine Medical Center (EMMC) was formed to help provide no-cost breast and cervical health services to underserved women, conduct breast and cervical health outreach and education to women (and men), and to often forgotten populations throughout Eastern Maine. From the beginning, members that need further diagnostic testing and/or treatment for breast or cervical cancer, EMMC writes off any of charges that are not covered by other means. Caring Connections also has been providing Cancer Support Services for breast cancer survivors since 1997. Recently Caring Connections, under Robin Long's leadership has expanded to: provide support for individuals with any type of cancer, began a Men's Cancer Network for men diagnosed with prostate/testicular/and penile cancers, added the complementary energy therapy Healing Touch for those in active cancer treatment for any size donation, expanded our educational workshop offerings to include cancer risk reduction education in the community and local middle schools, began **LIVESTRONG** which is a free 12 week exercise program for cancer survivors, collaborated with Impact Melanoma to provide education and free sunscreen in high use areas, and hosting a Winter Retreat for any cancer survivor and their supporters.

Robin Long is the rock of Caring Connections since its inception. Robin is passionate and tenacious at being an advocate to make sure Caring Connections reaches and empowers as many women as possible who would benefit from our services. She exhausts all opportunities to outreach with her community and encourages those to live a healthy life, cancer free. Robin is a true life-saver for many women in Eastern Maine that have received a diagnosis of breast cancer, especially for those that were uninsured or underserved and became members of the Caring Connections Screening program. Just this past May, two women were diagnosed with breast cancer, that have been part of the program for multiple years.

Throughout Robin's 22 years at Caring Connections (currently the employee with the most years of service at Bangor Region YMCA) she has demonstrated a conviction for supporting

the mission of both the YMCA (strengthening our Community through youth development, healthy living, and social responsibility) and Caring Connections' individual mission (Providing outreach, education, advocacy, and support, as well as access to quality breast and cervical health services to individuals in Eastern Maine

Beginning in 1998, Caring Connections began to provide cancer support services to women diagnosed with breast cancer. In 2016, under Robin's direction, cancer support services were extended to any person with any type of cancer. For many, Robin is the first point of contact when reaching out to Caring Connections for support. She attends oncology appointments with people that are at the beginning stages of diagnosis, through treatment, and sometimes even providing support for follow up visits after completing active treatment. Many women say that Robin has been their lifeline throughout their breast cancer journey. Often I find Robin patiently listening and talking to a newly diagnosed person for an extended period of time. She is an invaluable resource for someone that is going through a cancer diagnosis. Over the years Robin has helped to co-facilitate the breast cancer support group, and now is co-facilitating the Men's Cancer Network, beginning to help improve the health of a new audience in Maine. . She is a safe, compassionate supporter. If someone in the community mentions Caring Connections, Robin Long is the person they will think about. No job is too small for Robin. She can often be seen throughout various communities posting information regarding various services and health education topics. To view a video that shows the impact Caring Connections and Robin has had on women on our screening program and breast cancer support services, go to:

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=caring+connections+20th+anniversary](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=caring+connections+20th+anniversary)

Robin has not limited her interest and passion for helping others to just the breast cancer community and Caring Connections. From 1987-1988 she worked for the Concord Feminist Health Center in Concord, NH instructing small groups of women on health care and birth control issues. In the early 90's Robin worked with persons of various disabilities and she also worked for Cutler Health Center at the University of Maine, assisting in preventative health services. As mentioned before, she has been working at Caring Connections since 1996 as an Assistant Director and in 2016 (as our CEO would say, finally accepted) the position of Caring Connections Manager. She has presented at the Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation's Mission Conference in Washington, DC in 2001 and 2005 about her work with finding funding to provide no-cost screening services for women ages 20-39. (She was instrumental in helping to find funding to serve younger women who were falling through the cracks. This particular program of Caring Connections is no longer externally funded, but Robin continues to look for funding opportunities to help support younger women who are underserved or uninsured, access screening services if they have a symptom and/or significant family history of breast cancer.)

When Robin sees a need in the community, she tries to help and most often volunteers her time. From 1996 to 2009 she was co-chair of the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center Lesbian Health Project (LHP). With Robin's leadership, the LHP produced health education materials for lesbians, as well as reaching out to health care providers to provide information regarding lesbian health needs. As chair of the Outreach Committee at Hammond Street Congregational Church, for many years, Robin coordinated the monthly free community bean lunch, and monthly responsibility for serving dinner at the greater Bangor Homeless Shelter. She is currently the Secretary for the Administrative Council of the Church.

2. How does the nominee show clear vision, innovation, and creativity in their work? (3 pts)

Robin has shown great vision in helping Caring Connections expand their services over the years. She is a great team member, collaborating with her co-workers to create a shared vision of how we can reach more individuals that are underserved and need support in not just our area, but the state as a whole. Robin has always been willing to add to her work load if it means being able to reach more underserved people. She makes sure that she attends as many local events as possible where she may reach people that may typically not go to health fairs or seek health and wellness information. She attends local country music jams, community events, as well as being present at local food pantries. She is passionate about providing extensive outreach, always thinking of new businesses and community agencies to contact to see if we can place posters and brochures regarding our services, again all with the goal to reach as many uninsured and underserved people as possible. Under her guidance, Caring Connections created a database of 1500 area businesses around the Greater Bangor area to contact and share information about our services. Robin carries information about Caring Connections with her at all times so that if she happens to come across a business outside of working hours that we have not contacted before, she makes sure she leaves information with them. This includes providing information at her own personal yard sale!

When Robin sees a need in the community, she tries to find ways to fill that need. She started providing outreach and education to women that were incarcerated and in transitional housing, helping to provide them with breast and cervical screening services for those that qualified. When she realized there was a need for appropriate educational materials for certain populations and topics, Robin helped to produce an in-house publication of the brochure "Breast Health for Young Women" which also comes in an easy to read version.

As a result of the totality of her work, Robin received the Maine Leadership Award for Breast Health in 2004. She also was recognized as a person who cares at the United Way's 2016 Campaign Kickoff and Community Rally.

3. How does the nominee show strong initiative in their work? What clear impact results from their actions? (3 pts)

Community-based jobs can often lead to burnout and fatigue. As mentioned before, after 22 years of providing outreach and education, as well as serving those affected by cancer in nearly every context, Robin has continued to show initiative with new programming, partnerships, collaborations, and approaches to evolve with the times. Robin goes above and beyond when it comes to providing outreach, education, and support for individuals in need, whatever that need may be. She does her best to accommodate needs of individuals as well as helping to remove barriers for accessing services. If she is unable to assist, she does her best to find someone that can. She stays connected with other community resources that are available for cancer survivors. Currently Robin is an active member of many groups that support the community such as: Maine's Impact Cancer Network Survivorship and Rehabilitation Task Force, Downeast Penquis Support Coalition, Downeast Cancer Conference Planning Committee, and the Christine B. Foundation Board Member. Robin is an exemplary collaborator, working with the Beth Wright Center, Dempsey Center, Cancer Support Center of Maine, Maine Breast Cancer Coalition, Purple Iris Foundation, and of course, Cancer Care of Maine.

Due to Robin's diligence over the past 22 years, Caring Connections has been able to provide 32,445 face to face education contacts just since 2006. We have provided 2540 clinical breast exams and 2378 screening and diagnostic mammograms. For women who have been diagnosed with breast cancer that have been a part of the screening programs, Caring Connections and Robin's role have been invaluable. Her impact over two decades can be measured by numbers and people served. But, the results that stand out about Robin lie with those who continue to trust, admire, and refer their loved ones or clients to her at Caring Connections.

Whether providing outreach or finding funding, Robin does not sit back. Over the years, Robin has helped to identify and write grants to help support Caring Connections Programming. Caring Connections received funding from The Avon Foundation to support outreach and education for breast health from 2006 through to 2017 (the last year that The Avon Foundation had grants available). Robin wrote and maintained all of the reporting numbers for the Avon grant, as well as continually searching and helping to write numerous grants from a variety of sources such as: Susan G. Komen Maine Affiliate, United Way, Maine Cancer Foundation, Maine Community Foundation, and the Anthem Foundation.

Every year, Caring Connections hosts a free Breast Cancer Survivors Retreat for any breast cancer survivor from the State of Maine. This is such an important event for our survivors and Robin takes great pleasure in making sure that the event is well planned and is a fun and relaxing event for the participants. When the retreat started in 1998 around 15-20 women

attended. Currently, we have 50 – 60+ women attend, showing the success of the retreat offering. You can view a video of the retreat from 2017 at this link <https://www.caringconnectionsmaine.org/single-post/2018/08/14/2018-Annual-Breast-Cancer-Survivor-Retreat>, with interviews of survivors as well as an interview with Robin.

These are just a few samples that Robin has shown strong initiative and had a significant impact from her actions.

4. How does the nominee motivate or develop the leadership of others? (3 pts)

Robin is a wonderful leader. She leads by example, demonstrating to everyone how passionate she is about supporting people that are marginalized, uninsured and underserved. She motivates everyone she comes in contact with to be their best selves. She often will volunteer for events that the YMCA hosts, beyond her responsibilities in Caring Connections, helping to assist in whatever ways are needed.

Robin does her best to meet the needs of the individuals Caring Connections serves whenever she can. No matter the context, she takes time to get to know someone and empowers them to overcome whatever obstacles they may be facing. Robin will often schedule her time off around oncology visits for individuals that would like support during appointments. Robin gives staff tasks to be accomplished, but she does not sit back and wait for things to be accomplished, she actively participates and supports all staff. She is very supportive when staff come to her to discuss ideas they have to support our program and community. She listens, gives feedback, and if appropriate, lends support to initiate the idea. Because of this leadership and willingness to be open to new ideas, we have expanded Caring Connections services to include the energy therapy Healing Touch, creating a new support group for men with Prostate, Testicular and Penile cancers, and this fall starting a Caregiver Support group. She is able to see the areas where staff have passions and provide guidance and support to successfully expand Caring Connections offerings.

Robin believes in people. While continuing to be a leader for those affected by cancer in Maine, she also helps other developing leaders to grow and impact the community together. For example, Robin was asked to be on the Board of Directors of the new Christine B. Foundation, and is assisting the young President and Director of the Foundation in whatever ways she can to help support the expansion of cancer support services in Eastern Maine. In 2002 Robin received the Mabel Wadsworth Women's Health Center "Woman Power" Volunteer Award because of her leadership and willingness to support the LGBTQ community. Just this past January, Robin initiated the staff from Caring Connections to attend a conference on supporting seniors in the LGBTQ community, so that we can make sure that we always are treating others with the utmost respect and honoring care.

5. Provide an example of how the nominee shows a high standard of integrity or leads through example. (3 pts)

In regards to how Robin shows a high standard of integrity or leads through example, in March of 2016, she saw a news clip of a young man from Maine who was in need of a kidney transplant. Robin felt a pull to be tested to see if she was a match, never imagining she would be, but feeling called to be tested. Robin was his perfect match (the doctors couldn't believe she wasn't a family member it was such a perfect match)! In December of 2017, she used her accrued sick time and donated her kidney to a complete stranger. She kept it quiet, because she is not one to bring attention to herself. It wasn't until the donor recipient asked her to share with others why she became a donor, that she revealed it publicly.

Robin Long is a humble, simple woman that loves to help others. She stands up for what is right for others, including advocating for what is needed in the Caring Connections program when services might be cut, changed, or for program expansion. She is an amazing person and boss! I am so honored to work with such a caring, compassionate, authentic, humorous, creative, courageous (along with many more adjectives) woman!