

My summary and recap of SABCS San Antonio 2023.

I would like to share my experience as a patient advocate at the annual SABCS convention in San Antonio, Texas December 4th through the 9th 2023.

I feel very grateful, and privileged to have had this opportunity to immerse myself in the week-long learning environment at this enormous convention.

This was my first time to Texas, and the reputation is true as everything is bigger in Texas, with over 10,000 people attending the convention did not disappoint.

Upon arrival I received a welcoming bag with a booklet outlining the events throughout the week, this took me about a day to get a grip on highlighting the events that I was most keen on going to as it was going to be impossible to get to every session.

The convention hall itself is so extensive. I got my steps in for sure going to all the different talks, this was great.

The beauty of these conventions is that the sessions will be replayed to get caught up on at a later date.

It was truly amazing how many topics were covered within all the information offered throughout the many conversations about advances in treatment, imaging, and the discussions about further explanation on the subtypes of the different breast cancers, this is only a fraction of what was talked about.

It was very special week to be in attendance there with the level of experts throughout the sessions .

I felt very lucky to be in the position to go and listen to them first hand, and also get an opportunity to ask questions to the panels.

There was so much to do in the area. I got to go see the famous Alamo with a fellow patient advocate, and walk along the beautiful famous River walk as the convention was right in the heart of these famous sites.

The weather was so amazing for getting out and getting exercise around the convention center.

In addition to the sessions, there was a giant size exhibition hall that had many exciting vendors.

These were really interesting as I had great conversations with some of these people gaining even further knowledge about what they were offering and how it relates to me as a breast cancer patient.

As an example I learned more about the breast cancer index test, and it's value further down the line in my treatment.

I also spoke with the founder of a cutting edge genetic testing company that will be able to offer a larger, extensive result on finding more genetic mutations than ever they were from dynamic labs.

There was a wonderful blend of relaxation along with as much learning as one could absorb.

For added benefit, and relaxation they had a beautiful Angora rabbit and a therapy dog to visit and love on, as well as yoga and massage therapy all free of charge and lots of wonderful free food, snacks and beverages throughout the exhibition hall.

We were extremely blessed with the our own patient advocate room which offered relaxation, privacy, networking and amazing fresh food all day, this was provided by the company Lilly. It is here that I was able to meet fellow patient advocates, and really join in stories and support and friendship.

I am happily taking away more valuable nuggets of information from the convention week that I can share in my own community with my advocacy work.

I cannot express enough how thankful I am for the LBCA and the scholarship program for us patient advocates.

I personally feel by attending these conventions it offers me a level of control that I am getting out there and learning and asking questions about this disease, this is empowering to me and connects me with people who are going through very similar experiences and it helps to feel not so alone in this.

Thank you so much,

Ciara