

Summary

- **Thoughts about what you learned throughout your entire experience at this event. (Describe the type of sessions you attended, how they compared to one another, etc.)**

During the San Antonio Breast Cancer Symposium (SABCS), I attended multiple types of sessions, including general, special, rapid fire, hot topics, and poster presentations. I also participated in a focus group, sponsored by Guardant Health. I especially enjoyed the special sessions on lobular breast cancer (ILC) and the related posters. It was inspiring to see a focus on ILC, and it gave me hope about new advances in the field. Also, I appreciated that Dr. Mouabbi took the time to meet with advocates, and was encouraged to hear about his work using AI in imaging, which may allow mammograms to catch ILC earlier. Another favorite were the “hot topics,” because the presenters summarized key research in lay person language. In addition, the hot topics sessions were smaller than the general sessions, giving patient advocates an opportunity to ask more questions.

- **What was your experience networking with other patient advocates?**

My experience networking with other patient advocates was one of the highlights of the meeting for me. Many of the ILC advocates who attended I had seen on Zoom calls, but had not met in person. The camaraderie and feeling that I was with “my people” was amazing. It was helpful to talk with others about different treatments, compare side effects of the medications, and learn about other ways to protect my health, such as considering more extensive blood work and labs. In addition, I appreciated being able to spend time in the patient advocacy lounge, where I met new people with all types of breast cancer and connected with friends from my Project Lead study group.

- **How will you use this experience and new knowledge in advancing ILC advocacy in the future?**

The experience of attending SABCS made me feel more comfortable reaching out to ILC staff and advocates in the future with questions about treatment and suggestions for advocacy activities that can be used in my local region. It's nice to have a personal relationship, rather than just a face with a name, and I hope to keep in touch with some of my new ILC friends.

- **What was one thing you wish you had known before this event AND what advice would you give another first time advocate attending this event?**

One thing I wished I knew before the event was that my hotel was about a 10 minute walk from the convention center. Although it was easy to walk to the convention center or take the shuttle, there were times when I felt uncomfortable walking to my hotel. Although there were no incidents, I encountered some unhoused people that made comments to me, including a man who walked behind me and said he had a machete. Next time I attend SABCS, I will spend a little more money to stay at one of the hotels directly across from or next to the convention center.

My advice for advocates attending the meeting for the first time includes registering and/or picking up conference materials before the official start of the conferences to save time and avoid the large crowds on the first day of the symposium. I would also encourage people to volunteer at the LCBA booth in the exhibit hall because it gives you the opportunity to spend time with LCBA staff and advocates you may not know. Plus, it's a lot of fun!