

## **Maria Flores**

My story begins when my boyfriends' father was diagnosed with Stage IV lung cancer. Once properly diagnosed he only lived 2 very painful and difficult months. I was by his side for almost the entire time.

His illness triggered me to get health insurance and schedule a complete physical. During my breast exam the doctor found nothing wrong. Just short of 2 months later I felt a lump on my right breast while getting dressed.

I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2008 and underwent 6 months of chemotherapy and 13 surgeries/procedures, but most importantly, I celebrated my ten-year remission anniversary February 2019.

I joined the City of Hope PFAC because I wanted to give back to a place that essentially saved my life. I have served as Vice-Chair for 1 term and as Chair for 2 terms. I am currently the Chair for PFAC of the Comprehensive Cancer Center Consortium for Quality Improvement. I also serve on the panel of the Alliance of Dedicated Cancer Centers committee and represent the patient voice and experience.

I am passionate about this work because, although I was able to advocate for myself, there are thousands who can't and they deserve to be heard. On top of that these panels provide a sounding board that allow us as patients and caregivers to make a change and improve the quality of all patients as well as allowing us to provide valuable insight in new guidelines, research, processes, etc. the possibilities are endless, we just need to stand up and take a stand.

In my professional life, I am a Sr. Paralegal and manage 3 law firms. My specialties are sexual abuse and molestation of minors and jury trial preparation and selection. I also oversee the business and financial/investment portfolio for a well-known retired attorney, mainly his investment properties, and manage 8 large apartment complexes in Los Angeles and Riverside Counties and design/project manage any and all remodels.