This NCCN QUICK GUIDE™ sheet summarizes key points from the complete NCCN Guidelines for Patients®: Breast Cancer – Metastatic (STAGE IV). These guidelines explain which tests and treatments are recommended by experts in cancer. To view and download the guidelines, visit NCCN.org/patients or, to order printed copies, visit Amazon.com.

### What is metastatic breast cancer?

It is cancer that has spread outside the breast to a distant site. Distant sites include bones, lungs, liver, and the brain. Stage IV breast cancer is metastatic cancer that was found at diagnosis.

### What health care is needed before treatment?

- A report of your health history and an exam of your body
- Blood tests to check for health problems
- Pictures of the insides of your chest with a CT scan
- Pictures of the insides of your belly area and maybe pelvis with CT or MRI scans
- Pictures of your spine, brain, or both with MRI if there may be cancer
- Pictures of your bones with a bone scan or sodium fluoride PET/CT
- Instead, pictures of your bones and insides with FDG PET/CT may be an option
- Pictures of your bones with x-rays if there may be cancer
- Removal of tissue samples to test for cancer
- Tests for two markers—hormone and HER2 receptors—within breast cancer cells
- Advice on genetic tests if your breast cancer risk may have been passed down from your parents

### What is the treatment approach for metastatic breast cancer?

Often, one treatment is used until it stops working or there are too many side effects. Then, another treatment is used. This approach is followed until there are no more options or you become too sick.
### What are the treatment options?

| For all cancers | ■ A clinical trial is a type of research that studies new health tests and treatments.  
■ Ask your treatment team if there is an open clinical trial that you can join. |
| For hormone receptor-positive breast cancer | ■ Chemotherapy may be given first if the cancer is quickly growing within internal organs.  
■ If you’re in premenopause, options include treatments that limit the ovaries from making hormones given with treatments for women in postmenopause.  
■ If you’re in postmenopause, options are treatments that block hormones from cancer cells or block a protein that makes estrogen. Treatments that stop certain growth signals within cancer cells may be added. |
| For hormone receptor-negative breast cancer | ■ If HER2-negative cancer, an option is chemotherapy.  
■ If HER2-positive cancer, options include treatment that targets HER2 given with or without chemotherapy. |

### Is the treatment working?

Different types of tests will be repeated on a regular basis to check treatment results. Some tests will be the same as those given before treatment.

### What are some tips for making good treatment decisions?

Ask your doctors many questions. Also, you could get a second opinion, attend support groups, and compare pros and cons.