

**By: Fran Drescher**

**I got famous, I got cancer, and I lived to talk about it.**

It took me two years and eight doctors to get a proper diagnosis. You've heard of a second opinion? Try seven "second" opinions. Honey, I got in the stirrups more times than Roy Rogers! After two years of misdiagnosis and mistreatment, I discovered that I had uterine cancer. Fortunately, it is a relatively slow-growing cancer, so it was still in stage one. But I had to get a radical hysterectomy, which is not an easy thing to endure. Other women have it much worse; when you are misdiagnosed you lose precious time.

There are thousands of talented, dedicated men and women who work every day to find a cure for cancer, and God bless 'em. But cures are few and far between. In the meantime, we women must take control of our bodies and put ourselves on the winning side of this battle. And that's why I launched the Cancer Schmancer Movement.

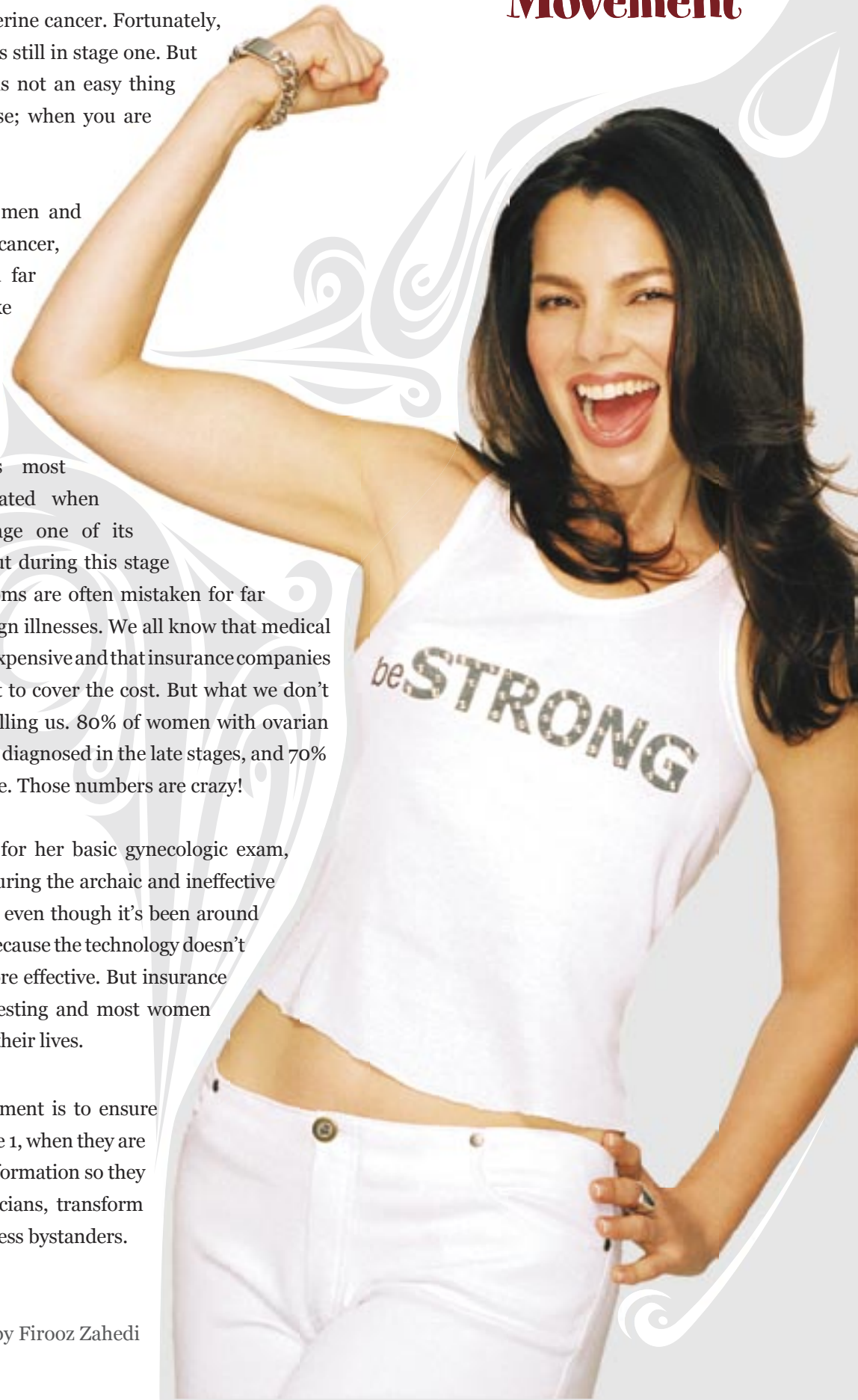
*"When I say "Cancer Schmancer," it's not to pretend that cancer isn't serious or deadly; believe me, I know firsthand that it is. "Cancer Schmancer" means "Cancer is not the boss of me!"*

Cancer is most easily treated when it's in stage one of its growth, but during this stage its symptoms are often mistaken for far more benign illnesses. We all know that medical testing is expensive and that insurance companies don't want to cover the cost. But what we don't know is killing us. 80% of women with ovarian cancer are diagnosed in the late stages, and 70% of them die. Those numbers are crazy!

What's crazier is that when a woman goes for her basic gynecologic exam, nothing north of the cervix is even checked during the archaic and ineffective manual pelvic exam (still standard procedure even though it's been around since my Aunt Ida was a girl! Oy!). That's not because the technology doesn't exist; the transvaginal ultrasound is much more effective. But insurance companies don't want to pay for thorough testing and most women don't even know about the tests that can save their lives.

The mission of the Cancer Schmancer Movement is to ensure that all women's cancers are diagnosed in Stage 1, when they are most curable. We want to arm women with information so they can become better partners with their physicians, transform into medical consumers, and not remain helpless bystanders.

**Cancer** 6·21™  
**Schmancer**™  
**Movement**



Even on the plane, the woman is told to put her breathing mask on first before helping her child because she is useless to her family if she is six feet under. When a woman is dying in the home, the far reaching effect on the immediate family, the extended family and the community in which she lives is profound. The psychological impact on her children affects how they learn, what kind of adults they grow into, and what kind of parents they become. So, it affects the forthcoming generation as well. We are dedicated to making people realize that the woman is the center of society from which all else ripples out. At all costs, we must keep the woman alive.

Secondly, we are galvanizing women and alerting Capitol Hill that the collective female voice is louder and more powerful than the richest health insurance lobbyist. We're lobbying for legislation to increase diagnostic tools and cancer screening tests as part of basic health care.

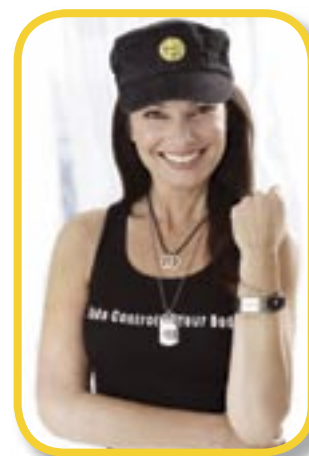
So, help us save lives by ensuring that all women's cancers are diagnosed in Stage 1, when they're most curable. Lock elbows with me. Together, we can demand thorough testing from health insurance companies and vote for politicians who make women's healthcare a real priority. We don't care who you vote for; just make sure who you vote for is voting for you.

The daughters of tomorrow will look back and thank us, the visionaries of today, for giving them a world in which no woman has to die of cancer due to late stage diagnosis.

I'm not glad I had cancer and I don't wish it on anyone, but I am better for it. Turning pain into purpose heals. Sometimes, the best gifts come in the ugliest packages.

Log onto [www.CancerSchmancer.org](http://www.CancerSchmancer.org) today and join our free membership. This movement is a revolution. We are the missing link!

*As Robert Browning wrote, "Make your reach greater than your grasp. Else, what's a heaven for?"*



photograph by Brian Nice

Fran is wearing merchandise available for purchase at [CancerSchmancer.org](http://CancerSchmancer.org), proceeds of which go directly to the organization.



Fran and her girlfriends, Lori Levine (left) and Emily Frances (right) lock elbows in support of the Cancer Schmancer Movement.