

Breast Cancer Disparities Study Begins

Community team leads Komen effort

In the United States, black women die more often and are often diagnosed younger with more aggressive forms of breast cancer than white women. The Susan G. Komen Oregon and Southwest Washington foundation is taking aim at reversing those unwanted trends.

As the first step in developing a multi-year initiative to address breast cancer disparities, Komen has partnered with a team of independent contractors who are actively involved with the Portland-metro area's African American community. The project, funded in part by a grant Komen received from the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute Community Partnership Program, was to be outlined on Wednesday during a scheduled news conference at the Portland NAACP office.

The research team reflects the community for its diversity and includes Angela Owusu-Ansah, PhD, professor of doctoral studies at Concordia University in northeast Portland; D. Bora Harris, MPA, diversity consultant; and Kelvin Hall, doctoral candidate and community advocate.

Data around demographics, breast cancer screening habits, and barriers to breast cancer screening and treatment will be collected as they look to inform Komen's work in reducing breast cancer mortality in Portland's African American community.

"The disparities are shocking. African American women, in the US, die from breast cancer nearly 40 percent more than white women. We need to address this!" stated Andrew Asato, CEO of Susan G. Komen Oregon & SW Washington. "We're looking forward to Dr. Owusu-Ansah and her team, whose incredible talents exactly fit our needs, collecting the data that will inform our future efforts, and helping us to create the community advisory group that will guide the formation of a multi-year Komen African American Initiative."



Dr. Owusu-Ansah commented, "We, as independent agents, are thrilled to work in tandem with Komen Oregon & SW Washington, to serve our community with warmth and humility. Reminded of our shared goals, we value the partnership and collaboration towards a better and common future of dignity, respect, and lived lives. We believe we will rediscover the resilience, determination, energy, and infinite diversity of African American women. And together, we will initiate new approaches for progress and health, for humanity as a whole."

Ms. Harris added, "It is refreshing to interact and participate in meaningful dialogue, where the outcome is beneficial to the community as a whole. In addition to health disparities within our underserved and underrepresented communities, as African American women, we have historically been taught to 'hush' concerning many things. This tradition of silence may have negatively impacted several phases of our quality of life in respect to our health."

Mr. Hall shared, "Fighting cancer is my mission right now. This research and development project seeks to join a shared community, local and globally, to find a cure to support the defeat and elimination of this disease."

Mr. Asato continued, "Thanks to the support of organizations like Legacy Health, we have a successful breast health education program in the faith-based community, called Worship in Pink. Now, it is time to move beyond education and do what we can to encourage action."

A new effort to address breast cancer disparities in Portland's African American community is led by Cindy Fletcher, director of programs for the Susan G. Komen Oregon and Southwest Washington foundation; Dr. Angela Owusu-Ansah, professor of doctoral studies at Concordia University; Bridget Jamieson, Komen's community programs manager; D. Bora Harris, diversity consultant; and Kelvin Hall, doctoral candidate and community advocate.

Vancouver NAACP Voter Drive

Elections matter. From school superintendent to sheriff to senator to president, our elected officials determine the quality and equality of our law enforcement, public education system, and so much more. But our representatives can hardly be representative of our communities or our needs if we do not do our civic duty.

The message about voting comes from the Vancouver branch of the NAACP which is inviting the community to join them on Saturday, July 21 for a voter registration drive, community meeting and potluck. The event will be held from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Vancouver Housing Authority, 2500 Main St.

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