

Philadelphia Foundation to Create Black Research Group

By Ayana Jones
Special to the NNPA from The Philadelphia Tribune

An initiative is underway to raise funds for a unique research effort. The Philadelphia Prostate Cancer Foundation is striving to raise \$400,000 to launch the first African American prostate cancer research group.

“This is one of the most important projects that I have ever worked on because of the chance there is to make a difference,” said Rebecca Boudwin, executive director of the PPCF.

Boudwin noted that one out of two African-American men will be diagnosed with prostate cancer.

“We want to find the cause of why this is happening and we want to find a cure. That’s the goal of this project. What we really need is the entire city of Philadelphia behind us.”

If the foundation is successful in meeting its fundraising goal by the end of the year, Boudwin said the organization would be eligible for larger government grants by entities such as the National Institutes of Health.

“We think that there is no other place than

the city of brotherly love to have this initiative. What is really setting Philadelphia apart in terms of making medical advances in prostate cancer is that we have five medical schools here,” she pointed out.

The foundation would use the funds to hire a director for the research program and build the research group. The goal is to launch the research group by June 1, 2014.

Last year, PCCF launched an African-American committee which is led by Congressman Chaka Fattah. Various athletes, physicians business and community leaders are members of the community.

Dr. Curtiland Deville, committee member and a radiation

‘What’s more compelling is Black men are twice as likely to die from prostate cancer than white men are’
— Curtiland Deville M.D.

oncologist at University of Pennsylvania said there are a number of factors that need to be studied to determine why African Ameri-

can men have higher incidents of prostate cancer than white men.

“What’s more compelling is Black men

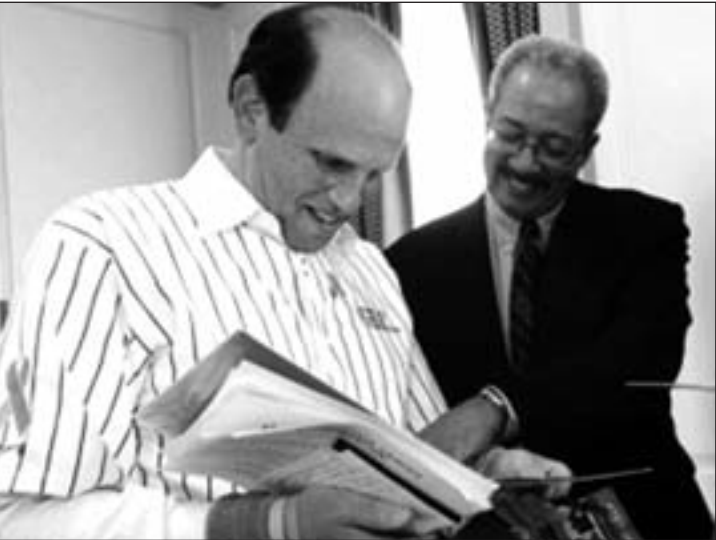
are twice as likely to die from prostate cancer, than white men are,” said Deville.

“The bottom line is we don’t know what those reasons are. Are there socioeconomic issues with healthcare access – issues with bias or institutional racism? Or are there underlying environmental factors – diet and lifestyle and underlying biologic issues? I think all of those are factors that need to be studied and investigated and we need funding to be able to do that.”

“Basically PCCF has said Philadelphia can be a great model for us to study these disparities. We have the population that is affected and we also have the medical resources with having multiple institutions that can devote study to it.”

Denville said this is an opportunity the community to become involved in supporting a unique research effort.

“Even if you give a small amount, here’s



Mike Milken, founder and chairman, Philadelphia Prostate Cancer Foundation with Congressman Chaka Fattah, who chairs the organization’s African American committee

your opportunity to buy into [finding] the reason why Black men are more affected by prostate cancer,” he stated.

Congressman Fattah has been instrumental in helping to raise money for the cause.

“What I’ve agreed to do is to try to raise awareness and to raise money so that we could develop a coordinated approach, centered in the Philadelphia area but national in scope, to have researchers try to delineate why the disease plays out differently for African-American men. We think that if we can figure out why it seems to be more energized among African-American men, maybe we can help all men,” said Fattah.

He noted that the Philadelphia region has the highest percentage of researchers at medical institutions in the country who are studying prostate cancer.

“What we want to do is try to get them to work together so that the research may proceed more quickly,” Fattah said.

“What I’m trying to do is to help more the process forward in a way in which we can get a more positive and rapid result.”

He partnered with Sens. Vincent Hughes and Anthony Williams to host a charity golf fundraiser on Sept. 30. Fattah chairs the Congressional Black Congressional Black Caucus Foundation which is also supporting the fundraising effort.

Founded by Mike Milken, the PCF is the leading philanthropic organization funding and accelerating research globally.

For information visit www.pcf.org/philadelphia/donate.

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