

Triple Negative Breast Cancer and Women of Color

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Every October, people lace up their sneakers and walk to support efforts to find a cure for breast cancer. In a sea of pink, there are heart wrenching stories of survival, homemade signs in memory of loved ones, and hope of a cure for this devastating disease that impacts more than 230,000 women and men every year. Even though many people are aware of breast cancer, there is one strain of this disease that few people know about. It's triple negative breast cancer, which has higher rates among women of color.

As CEO of the new Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital in Watts and an African American woman, I want to increase awareness of this devastating type of breast cancer. About 15 to 20 percent of breast cancers are triple negative. Studies have suggested that being premenopausal, African American, or Caribbean increases the risk of developing triple negative breast cancer. Among African American women who develop breast cancer, about 20 to 40 percent will be triple negative.

Unlike other breast cancers, the most effective treatment for triple negative breast cancer is chemotherapy. Newer treatments that prevent, slow or stop cancer growth by targeting breast cancer receptors aren't as helpful in treating triple negative breast cancer, which makes early detection even more important.

Throughout my 20-plus year healthcare career, I have found that lack of access to information and lack of access to resources are among the biggest barriers to individuals in our community receiving effective care. Much of the time, people don't know where to start. I am committed to helping address this issue, which is why I created the Learning Center at the new Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital. The objectives of the Learning Center are to provide resources that help residents understand and enroll in health insurance, to educate community residents about how to navigate the healthcare system and maintain their health, and to partner with community providers and organizations to help residents manage their chronic conditions.

As part of our Learning Center efforts, we are partnering with Triple Step

Toward the Cure, which raises funds and educates communities about triple negative breast cancer. For those who are diagnosed with breast cancer, understanding their treatment options and having a sup-

port system are critical to managing their health. The new Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital and Triple Step want to be there throughout the healing journey. Through this partnership, we will provide

information to help individuals learn about screening and treatment options, and ensure they have adequate healthcare

The vision of the new Martin Luther King Jr. Community Hospital is to be a leading model of innovative, collaborative community healthcare. Our mission is to provide compassionate, quality care and improve the health of our community. This partnership is part of our commitment and focus to both. To learn more about the new hospital, visit



www.MLKCommunityHospital.org and for more information on how you can support Triple Step Toward

a Cure visit www.TripleStepTowardtheCure.org.

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