

News Release

Date: September 29, 2011

Contact: Michele Fisher

Phone: 732-235-9872

E-mail: fisherm2@umdnj.edu



**\$1.6M Awarded to Support Collaborative Breast Cancer Study of African-American Women
at The Cancer Institute of New Jersey**

Effort Expands to Nine Counties Across the Garden State

New Brunswick, N.J. – Compared to Caucasian women, African-American women are more likely to be diagnosed with breast cancer at a younger age and at a later stage, and have more aggressive features associated with poor prognosis. However, the reasons for these differences remain unknown. To address these issues, The Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ) is expanding its current research efforts as part of a new consortium of four studies in African-American women. CINJ is a Center of Excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School.

The Women's Circle of Health Study, the Carolina Breast Cancer Study, the Black Women's Health Study, and the Multiethnic Cohort Study will examine 5,500 women with breast cancer and 5,500 women without cancer, representing the largest study to date on this subject. In all, the National Cancer Institute awarded \$19.3 million to support the collaborative effort, which is being led by Christine Ambrosone, PhD, Roswell Park Cancer Institute; Julie Palmer, ScD, Boston University; and Robert Millikan, PhD, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The Women's Circle of Health Study, based at CINJ and led by epidemiologist [Elisa Bandera, MD, PhD](#), will receive \$1.6 million in funding over the next five years to continue recruiting women and to expand the target area from seven central and northern New Jersey Counties to nine.

The Women's Circle of Health study is population based, with cases of women with breast cancer being identified through the New Jersey State Cancer Registry, which is an NCI Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) database. Women without breast cancer are identified through community outreach efforts by local churches and civic groups. Since 2006, more than 2,400 African-American and Caucasian women from Bergen, Essex, Hudson, Mercer, Middlesex, Passaic and Union counties in New Jersey have participated. The latest award allows CINJ investigators to continue recruitment efforts in these counties, as well as expand to Burlington and Monmouth counties.

Through interviews with study volunteers, investigators are gathering demographic and medical information, as well as reproductive, lifestyle and diet histories. Saliva and tumor samples are also collected for molecular analyses. Through the evaluation of these potential risk factors, the researchers hope to determine how they relate to the early development of breast cancer in the African-American population.

"Previous breast cancer studies comparing African-American to Caucasian women have been generally based on too few African-American women to understand any differences," noted Dr. Bandera, who is also an associate professor of epidemiology at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and UMDNJ-School of

Public Health. "Most studies of breast cancer have been conducted in Caucasian women. Therefore, there is great need for studies like this, focusing on African-American women and with large enough numbers to be able to study the rare breast cancer subtypes, which tend to be more common in African-American women."

To learn more, visit: http://cinjweb.umdnj.edu/bandera/breast_study.htm.

About The Cancer Institute of New Jersey

The Cancer Institute of New Jersey (www.cinj.org) is the state's first and only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center dedicated to improving the detection, treatment and care of patients with cancer, and serving as an education resource for cancer prevention. CINJ's physician-scientists engage in translational research, transforming their laboratory discoveries into clinical practice, quite literally bringing research to life. To make a tax-deductible gift to support CINJ, call 732-235-8614 or visit www.cinjfoundation.org. CINJ is a Center of Excellence of UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Follow us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/TheCINJ.

The CINJ Network is comprised of hospitals throughout the state and provides the highest quality cancer care and rapid dissemination of important discoveries into the community. Flagship Hospital: Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital. System Partner: Meridian Health (Jersey Shore University Medical Center, Ocean Medical Center, Riverview Medical Center, Southern Ocean Medical Center, and Bayshore Community Hospital). Major Clinical Research Affiliate Hospitals: Carol G. Simon Cancer Center at Morristown Medical Center, Carol G. Simon Cancer Center at Overlook Medical Center, and Cooper University Hospital. Affiliate Hospitals: CentraState Healthcare System, JFK Medical Center, Mountainside Hospital, Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Hamilton (CINJ Hamilton), Somerset Medical Center, The University Hospital/UMDNJ-New Jersey Medical School*, and University Medical Center at Princeton. *Academic Affiliate

###