



2024 Annual Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence (CHECoE) **RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM**

JUNE 7, 2024

9AM- 5PM

Rutgers Cancer Institute

195 Little Albany Street | New Brunswick, NJ 08903

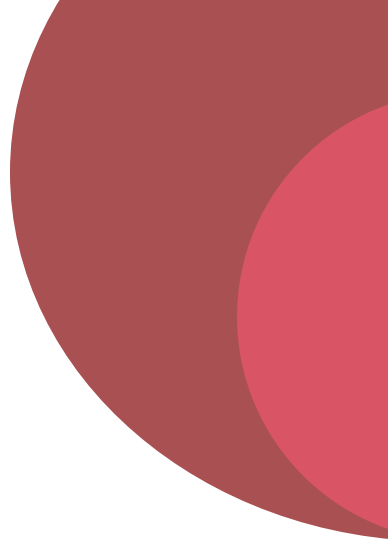




TABLE OF CONTENTS

5	WELCOME
6	ABOUT CHECOE
7	COMMITTEE MEMBERS
8	AGENDA
9	YOUR HOST
10	TODAY'S SPEAKERS
24	SELECTED ABSTRACTS
28	CCAB MEMBERS
30	CHECOE IN THE COMMUNITY
31	CONNECT WITH CHECOE

Welcome

A message from the CHECoE Director

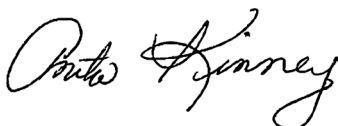


Welcome to the Annual CHECoE Symposium!

I am delighted you joined us today at the first in-person Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence (CHECoE) Annual Symposium Research Symposium. The Symposium Planning Committee and I are looking forward to sharing an informative and engaging experience in our intimate auditorium of Rutgers Cancer Institute. Your presence is truly appreciated as the goal of this symposium is to foster collaborations and bidirectional communications between researchers and community members within our New Jersey catchment area. Within the layout of this day, you will exchange knowledge on research, hear and see innovative ways we are working with communities, engage in flash talk presentations, receive refreshing messages from amazing keynote speakers and enjoy each other's company through interactive discussions. I hope you leave this conference feeling charged and refreshed in your work to help improve cancer health inequities.

I am grateful for each dedicated Symposium Planning Committee member's contribution in coordinating this special event. Every minute of your participation made a difference and your skills and leadership helped make this event come to fruition. It has been an honor working with you all as we developed the agenda together and thoughtfully assembled the sessions of speakers. I also appreciate every participant who is in the audience today and had interest in being a speaker today. Your time and enthusiasm to submit an abstract is highly regarded and noted for future reference. As we network throughout the day, I look forward to the in-person opportunity to smile and greet you respectively.

Sincerely,



Anita Kinney, PhD, RN

Professor, Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology
School of Public Health
Director, Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence
Associate Director for Population Science and Community Outreach
Rutgers Cancer Institute
Director, ScreenNJ

Rutgers Cancer Institute Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence (CHECoE)

About the Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence (CHECoE)

The Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence is a formal partnership between the Rutgers School of Public Health and the Rutgers Cancer Institute, which will serve as a catalyst for training and education, research, community engagement, and public policy advocacy surrounding cancer health equity in one of the nation's most ethnically and racially diverse states.

View our Fact Sheet

Advancement and impact drives everything we do at the Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence. Our goal is to contribute in a lasting and meaningful way for all communities throughout the state, to build strong community partnerships and reduce cancer health disparities. This impact report unequivocally demonstrates our dedication to cancer health equity and our strong efforts in research, community outreach and engagement, training and education, and public policy advocacy and communication with all the communities across our catchment area of New Jersey. Our hope is to build upon our successes each year to make the Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence the leading center in the nation for achieving cancer health equity.

Download our impact report.



Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence **Impact Report 2021** 



MISSION

Advance the achievement of equitable access, improved health care quality, and better outcomes across the cancer continuum – prevention, early detection, treatment, survivorship, and end-of-life care – through research, education and training, community engagement and outreach, and public policy advocacy.

VISION

Be the leading center in the nation for achieving cancer health equity, improving the quality of cancer care, and reducing the cancer burden.

Read our Statement on Racism, Inclusion, and Diversity

GIVING

The Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence at Rutgers Cancer Institute is affiliated with Rutgers University as part of Rutgers Health, the most comprehensive academic health care provider organization in New Jersey. To support the outreach and engagement activities of the Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence with a **tax-deductible contribution, visit this link.**

Annual Symposium

Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence

Planning Committee Members

Anita Kinney, PhD, RN

Professor, Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology
School of Public Health
Director, Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence
Associate Director for Population Science and
Community Outreach
Rutgers Cancer Institute
Director, ScreenNJ

Sarah J. Scharf, DrPH, MPH

Executive Director
Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence
Rutgers Cancer Institute

Antoinette (Nan) Stroup, PhD

Professor of Epidemiology
Department of Biostatistics & Epidemiology
Rutgers School of Public Health
Director, New Jersey State Cancer Registry
Rutgers Cancer Institute

Denalee O'Malley, PhD, LSW

Rutgers State University of New Jersey
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School Department
of Family Medicine and Community Health

Evelyn Arana, DrPH

Assistant Professor
Department of Medicine
Rutgers Cancer Institute

Jian Cao, PhD

Associate Professor
Department of Medicine
Rutgers Cancer Institute

Yonaira M. Rivera, PhD, MPH

Assistant Professor
School of Communication & Information
Rutgers University

Tamara Horn

Program Manager – Administration
Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence
Rutgers Cancer Institute









Theresa R. Lofton

Program Coordinator
Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence
Rutgers Cancer Institute

Jasmine Bagner

Staff Assistant
Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence
Rutgers Cancer Institute

Agenda

9:00am – 9:30am	Registration & Continental Breakfast		
9:30am – 10:00am	Welcome and CHECoE Progress Updates	Speaker: Anita Kinney	
10:00 am – 10:25am	Utilizing STRIDE Data for Cancer Health Equity Research	Speaker: Antoinette “Nan” Stroup	
10:25am – 10:35am	Cancer Disparities Funding: Opportunities for Basic and Translational Investigators	Speaker: Jian “CJ” Cao	
10:35am – 11:20am	Basic and Translational Cancer Disparities Science Flash Talks	Moderator: Jian “CJ” Cao	
11:20am – 11:30am	Break		
11:30am – 12:15pm	Developing Two-Way Partnerships in Cancer Prevention: Advocating Facts and Research with Passion	Keynote Speaker: Nikki Tripplett	
12:15pm – 1:00pm	Patient & Community Advocate Panel Discussion	Moderator: Elizabeth Talmont	
1:00pm – 2:00pm	Networking Lunch		
2:00pm – 3:00pm	Becoming a Equity Warrior	Keynote Speaker: Narjust Florez	
3:00pm – 3:15pm	Break		
3:15pm – 3:45pm	Population & Clinical Disparities Science Flash Talks	Moderator: Evelyn Arana	
3:45pm – 4:30pm	Selected Abstract Flash Talks	Moderator: Denalee O'Malley	
4:30pm	Closing Remarks		

About Dr. Anita Kinney



Anita Kinney, PhD, RN

Professor, Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology
School of Public Health
Director, Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence
Associate Director for Population Science and Community Outreach
Rutgers Cancer Institute
Director, ScreenNJ

Dr. Anita Kinney has been an actively funded investigator in cancer prevention and control for over 25 years. Her research brings a combination of behavioral science, clinical, and epidemiologic perspectives to address unsolved cancer problems and health disparities in diverse populations and settings. Her overarching research goal is to understand variation in cancer risk, determinants of risk and outcomes, and to use this information to develop effective interventions that facilitate informed decision-making, positive changes in health behaviors, and guideline-concordant genomic care delivery that leads to better outcomes. Much of Dr. Kinney's research has focused on documenting determinants of interest, access and use of genomic tests, and related health services in diverse populations, and using this information to better understand and address health disparities. She has also had considerable

experience leading and collaborating on large community-based and population-based randomized trials that have developed and implemented effective interventions to promote cancer risk assessment, risk reduction, screening and care delivery in average-risk and high-risk populations, and appropriate translation of genetic discoveries into clinical practice. Further, Dr. Kinney has pioneered effective culturally targeted and telehealth genetic risk communications, behavior change, and genomic testing interventions in cancer survivors and their relatives. This research has helped shape health policy and clinical guidelines. In addition, she has developed and tested effective health promotion interventions in cancer survivors incorporating genomic and other biomarkers to better understand biobehavioral mechanisms underlying intervention effects and improve cancer care delivery.

For full profile and biography information, [click here.](#)

Keynote Speaker



Becoming a Equity Warrior

Narjust Florez, MD

Associate Director of The Cancer Care Equity Program
Thoracic Medical Oncologist, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Assistant Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School
Associate Editor, JAMA Oncology

To learn more about our featured keynote speaker, visit:
dana-farber.org/find-a-doctor/narjust-florez
Twitter: @NarjustFlorezMD

Narjust Florez, MD, Dr. Narjust Florez is originally from Venezuela, she graduated first in her medical school class at the Universidad Catolica Nordestana in the Dominican Republic. She completed her internal medicine residency at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School (selected as the most scholarly resident in the Department of Medicine in 2015 and 2016) and fellowship at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, where she was Chief Fellow from 2018 -2019.

She is a thoracic medical oncologist and the Associate Director of The Cancer Care Equity Program at Dana-Farber Cancer Institute and an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School. In 2022, Dr. Florez also became the first Latina to hold an Associate Editor position in Oncology as the new Associate Editor for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at JAMA Oncology.

Dr. Florez's clinical interests include targeted therapy for lung cancer and the care of women and young patients with lung cancer, including their unique aspects of cancer survivorship. She is the principal investigator of the Sexual Health Assessment in Women with Lung Cancer (SHAWL) Study, the largest study to date evaluating sexual dysfunction in women with lung cancer. Additionally, she is also the principal investigator on other notable studies, including the Fertility and Sexual Health Effects of Immune Checkpoint Inhibitors on young women with Non-small Cell Lung Cancer and Melanoma (FhINCH) Study, The Diagnostic Delays in Lung Cancer (LEAD) Study, and the Young Lung Cancer (YLC) Study, which evaluates the psychosocial needs of young patients with lung cancer.

Apart from her clinical interests in lung cancer, she is also a globally acclaimed and highly productive researcher in cancer health disparities, gender and racial discrimination in medical education and medical practice. Dr. Florez is one of the co-founders of the Twitter community

#LatinasInMedicine, now composed of about 10,000 members globally. She has received many awards, including the first-ever Mayo Clinic Diversity and Inclusion Champion Award in 2017, the 2018 Resident of the Year Award by the National Hispanic Medical Association, the 2018 Minority Scholar in Cancer Research Award by American Association of Cancer Research, the 2019 Mayo Brothers Distinguished Fellowship Award, the 2020 Rising Star Award by LEAD National Conference for Women in Hematology and Oncology, the 2021 International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer (IASLC) North America Cancer Care Team Award for Outstanding Clinical Care. More recently, she received the 2023 Career Development Award in Racial and/or Ethnic Disparities by the American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO), and the 2023 Medical Marvel Award by Newsweek.

In addition, Dr. Florez founded the Florez Lab in 2019. The laboratory focuses on lung cancer, social justice issues in medicine, and medical education. The laboratory's long-term goals are to create a welcoming environment for medical trainees from historically underrepresented groups in medicine while improving the care of vulnerable populations. Members of the Florez Lab are agents of change. Since its foundation, the Florez laboratory has received research funding from several national agencies and published over 50 original studies and editorials.

Dr. Florez has over 115 scientific publications and her work has been published in high impact journals such as the Journal of Clinical Oncology, Nature, Cancer Cell, JAMA Oncology and Lancet Oncology. In 2021, she was awarded the Most Highly Cited Author Award by The Mayo Clinic Proceedings. Her work has been featured in various media outlets including The New York Times, STAT News, Healio, OncoLive, Vox News, Business Insider, ASCO Post, ASCO Connection, Doximity, and The Cancer Letter.



Featured Speaker



Developing Two-Way Partnerships in Cancer Prevention: Advocating Facts and Research with Passion.

Nikki “Trip” Tripplett

Survivor and Patient Advocate

Nikki “Trip” Tripplett was diagnosed with multifocal breast cancer at age 36, in 2015. She had a strong family history of breast cancer, and had the full battery of treatments - 16 rounds chemo, single mastectomy followed by contralateral mastectomy, 37 rounds of radiation, and countless other surgeries. Trip lives in Texas as she has since moving there for school in 1998. She is a runner, influencer, entrepreneur, and breast cancer advocate.

In 2015 during treatment for Breast Cancer, Trip was angered by the treatment she was receiving Not Only from her initial healthcare team, but also by the “patients of Privilege”, and that’s where her Fire Style of Advocacy was born. Trip took her anger to Social media and landed in Forbes Magazine as a result of her anger and efforts. In 2018 she walked the runway during NY Fashion Week for the #Fearless fashion show by #Cancerland and #AnaOno benefitting Metavivor - she also interviewed other participants. She was interviewed on Houston’s Isaiah Factor Uncensored about her experience. She has continued to Advocate during New York Fashion week serving as Emceeing for the 2020 and 2023 NYFW shows raising funds for Cancer Research.

Trip Serves on the Board of the National Non-Profit organization, Cancer Culture and has worked extensively with Young Survival Coalition to fundraise, provide support programs to cancer survivors, represent her community and get information about breast cancer into the community discourse. Her advocacy work has been featured in Forbes and Glamour Magazine, Everyday Health Magazine and countless other articles.



STRIDE Dashboard Speakers



Utilizing STRIDE Data for Cancer Health Equity Research

Antoinette (Nan) Stroup, PhD

Professor, Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology
Professor of Epidemiology
Department of Biostatistics & Epidemiology
Rutgers School of Public Health
Director, New Jersey State Cancer Registry
Rutgers Cancer Institute

Dr. Antoinette Stroup earned her BS and MS degrees from the University of Utah in Salt Lake City and her PhD from the University of California, Berkeley in Epidemiology. She is a Professor of Cancer Epidemiology in the Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology at the Rutgers School of Public Health; and is the Director of the Cancer Epidemiology Services (CES) and New Jersey State Cancer Registry at the New Jersey Department of Health. As Director, Dr. Stroup manages and oversees all administrative and operational aspects of the State's population-based cancer surveillance system and research-related activities (e.g., protocol development, institutional review board compliance, patient contact) through the CES Cancer Research Program.

With more than 15 years of experience in cancer surveillance and cancer registry management,

Dr. Stroup has received funding for over 40 cancer research studies, covering a wide array of research topics for a variety of cancer types including breast, prostate, cervical, colorectal, ovarian, and liver cancers as well as cancers among adolescents and young adults. Her current research projects include multi-registry collaborations studying risk and outcomes among Latino and Asian race and ethnic subgroups with breast, colorectal and cervical cancer and African-American men with prostate cancer.

Dr. Stroup is also the Assistant Director of Research and Catchment Data at the Community Outreach and Education Center of Excellence, working closely with Dr. Kinney and Community Outreach and Education team to ensure that research conducted by the Cancer Institute addresses the catchment area priorities for cancer, risk factors, and disparities.

For full profile and biography information, [click here](#).



Daniel Pearson, MA

Manager, Catchment Data & Surveillance
Community Outreach and Engagement
Rutgers Cancer Institute

Daniel Pearson is the Manager for Catchment Data and Surveillance at Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey's Center for Cancer Health Equity (CHECoE), where he coordinates the collection, organization and evaluation of the center's catchment area and outreach activities data and fulfills custom data requests for research program members.

At CHECoE, Daniel developed the STRIDE Dashboard, an interactive data dashboard (built with R Shiny) committed to facilitating and supporting research relevant to the cancer

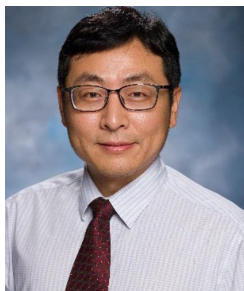
center catchment area. STRIDE includes system-wide clinical trials enrollment and tumor registry data, while aggregating publicly available data sources including cancer rates, risk factors, screening, demographics, socioeconomic and environmental impact, among others. He also participates in the Catchment Area Research and Data Science (CARDS) group, which brings together professionals from NCI-designated cancer centers to share catchment data resources and solve common data science problems.

For more information and to access the STRIDE- Interactive Data Dashboard, [click here](#).



Moderators - Flash Talks

Basic and Translational Cancer Disparities Science



Cancer Disparities Funding: Opportunities for Basic and Translational Investigators

Jian Cao, Ph.D

Associate Professor
Department of Medicine
Rutgers Cancer Institute

Dr. Jian Cao is an Assistant Professor of Medicine at Rutgers Cancer Institute. He directs a research laboratory to elucidate the roles of epigenetic mechanisms that regulate anti-tumor immune response and to translate the findings to the clinic.

Dr. Cao received his B.S. degree through an Interdisciplinary Program, Nanjing University and China Pharmaceutical University, China. He received a Ph.D. degree from Shanghai

Institute of Biochemistry and Cell Biology, Chinese academy of Sciences, China. He completed his postdoctoral training on cancer epigenetics with Dr. Qin Yan at Yale School of Medicine. He has made significant contributions to the understanding of the functions of KDM5 histone demethylases in cancer development, metastasis, drug resistance, and immune escape.

For full profile and biography information, [click here](#).

Moderating the following Flashtalks:

1. **Understanding Variability in Clinical Outcomes Among Children Treated for Cancer**
Speaker: Peter Cole
2. **Global Variation in Microplastic Exposure and Cancer Disparity**
Speaker: Subhajyoti De
3. **Ancestry Informative Markers in Tumor-Sequencing Data**
Speaker: Shridar Ganesan
4. **Triple Negative Breast Cancer in Black women: The Genomic Rearrangement Landscape and Its Relationship to Obesity and Neoadjuvant Treatment Outcomes**
Speaker: Coral Omene

Moderators - Flash Talks

Population & Clinical Disparities Science



Evelyn Arana, DrPH

Assistant Professor
Department of Medicine
Rutgers Cancer Institute

Dr. Evelyn Arana joins us as an Assistant Professor of Medicine, in the Division of Medical Oncology at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. She will be a resident member of the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey and she joins us from the University of Rochester as a former T32 Research Fellow/Research Assistant Professor in Cancer Prevention and Control within their Department of Surgery and Division of Supportive Care in Cancer. Dr. Arana's research focuses on addressing cancer disparities by testing behavioral interventions for primary

prevention and symptom management. Her research portfolio includes working on understanding racial/ethnic disparities in cancer screening among women with intellectual disabilities and working on an mHealth smoking cessation clinical trial for Hispanics. Currently, Dr. Arana is focusing on behavioral research to reduce side effects from cancer and its treatments in Hispanic cancer patients and survivors. As a bilingual first-generation Hispanic, Dr. Arana is very passionate about helping Hispanics with cancer have a better quality of life.

For full profile and biography information, [click here](#).

Moderating the following Flashtalks:

1. **Cancer Genetic Risk Assessment Uptake When Cost Barrier For Genetic Counseling Was Addressed**
Speaker: Jinghua An
2. **The Geography Of Prostate Cancer Disparities.**
Speaker: Hari Ilyer
3. **Colorectal Cancer Screening Disparities for Persons with Diabetes in the U.S.: The Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 2012-2018**
Speaker: Dena O'Malley
4. **Personalized Oncology Promoting Equity for Black Lives (PROPEL)**
Speaker: Sam Tundelo

Moderators- Selected Abstracts



Flash Talk:

Colorectal Cancer Screening Disparities for Persons with Diabetes in the U.S.: The Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, 2012-2018

Denalee O'Malley, PhD, MSW

Rutgers State University of New Jersey
Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School Department of
Family Medicine and Community Health

Denalee M. O'Malley, Ph.D., M.S.W., is a tenure-track, Assistant Professor in the Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Department of Family Medicine and Community Health's Research Division. She is an Associate Member of the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey. Previously, she served as the Program Manager for the Rutgers Cancer Institute's Cancer Prevention and Control Research Program and the Rutgers Center for Cancer Survivorship. She is an oncology social work researcher who specializes in using mixed methods to inform intervention development and care model redesign to improve care quality and promote health equity. She has cultivated strong content expertise in cancer prevention and control and care delivery research (in primary care and cancer care settings), working at multiple levels (e.g., patients, clinicians, clinical teams, organizations) using participatory engaged research processes. Dr. O'Malley is contact Principal Investigator for Advancing Care Coordination to Enhance Shared Care for Complex Cancer Survivors

in Primary Care (1U01CA290653-01), which uses mixed methods approach to tailor and test a care coordination health system intervention to improve cardiovascular disease risk management for 'complex' cancer survivors. She also leads, "Optimizing Colorectal Cancer Screening among Patients with Diabetes in Safety-net Primary Care Settings: Targeting Implementation Approaches" (K99 CA256043/R00CA256043). She recently completed the Institute for Implementation Science Scholars Program at Washington University in Saint Louis. Dr. O'Malley has participated in the design and delivery of individual and small group interventions (e.g., eHealth, small group facilitation, and psychosocial care) across several primary care and cancer survivorship focused research projects. She has collaborated on several NIH-funded (e.g., NCI, NIDA, NHLBI) implementation science projects to assess and intervene at multiple levels to translate evidence-based practices into real-world care delivery settings.

For full profile and biography information, [click here](#).

Moderating the following Selected Abstracts:

- 1. Neighborhood-level SES and Demographic Disparities in Health Outcomes Among Cancer Patients Diagnosed with COVID-19 in New Jersey During 2020-2021**
Speaker: Susan German
- 2. Cigarette Relighting: A Prevalent Yet Poorly Understood Cancer Disparity**
Speaker: Michelle Kennedy
- 3. Cancer Analytics and South Asian Health – Breast Cancer Study: Updates From The Completed Pilot Phase**
Speaker: Jaya Satagopan
- 4. An Exploration of Social Determinants of Health and Follow-Up Care in Young Adult Cancer Survivors**
Speaker: Angela Senger



Moderators - Community Panel



Elizabeth Talmont, DNP, ANP-BC

Vice President for Research Development at Planned Parenthood of Northern, Central and Southern New Jersey (PPNCSNJ)
Community Cancer Action Board, Co-Chair, Rutgers Cancer Institute

Elizabeth Talmont, DNP, ANP-BC has been a nurse for over 20 years and a lifelong reproductive and sexual health advocate. She currently she serves as the Vice President for Research Development at Planned Parenthood of Northern, Central and Southern New Jersey (PPNCSNJ). An agency that operates 16 health centers and conducts over 90,000 patient visits a year. In her role, she oversees a diverse portfolio of industry clinical trials, academic and social science studies. She manages risk and quality management projects, is a leader on the telehealth implementation team, and provides patient care. Her passion is innovation and research that directly impacts clinical practices. Prior to PPNCSNJ, she worked for 16 years at Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) in Medical Affairs Division and for the Consortium of Abortion Providers (CAPS). She was responsible for publishing the PPFA Medical Standards and Guidelines, including gender affirming hormone care, medical abortion

and anesthesia. She produced e-learning modules and trainings across the country in addition to organizing the annual PPFA National Medical Conference. She serves as a PPFA clinical accreditation surveyor. Academically, she completed her Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree from Rutgers University in October 2020. Her doctoral project focused on telehealth readiness among perinatal nurses. She holds an MSN ('02) and BSN ('97) from Rutgers University and a BA in Humanities from Hofstra University ('91). She has served on the National Abortion Federation (NAF) board (2013-2019) and sits on the various community boards including the Westfield Regional Board of Health and the Rutgers Cancer Institute, Community Action Board where she co-chairs the Citizen Scientist Advisory Council. When not reading and writing, she enjoys yoga, cycling, and a good cocktail, all in an effort to manage a household with her husband, Greg and their two teenage daughters, Lily and Lucie.



Understanding Variability in Clinical Outcomes Among Children Treated for Cancer

Peter Cole, MD

Chief, Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology
Embrace Kids Foundation Endowed Chair in Pediatric Hematology/Oncology
Director of Hematology, Oncology and Cellular Therapies
at Bristol-Myers Squibb Children's Hospital
Director, New Jersey Pediatric Hematology and Oncology Research Center of Excellence

Research Interests

My research efforts remain focused on developing new treatments to improve the lives of children and adolescents with blood disorders and cancer. My laboratory, funded by the National Institutes of Health, investigates why some patients suffer side effects of cancer treatment, while others do not. We have identified common genetic variants and specific dietary factors that increase the risk of experiencing side effects of anticancer therapies. In addition, we are working to develop interventions to reduce specific side effects, such as the loss of short-term memory or attention span (symptoms of "chemo brain"). Clinically, I have been actively involved on a global level,

in designing and conducting clinical trials for children diagnosed with leukemia or lymphoma, through my leadership or advisory roles in a number of cooperative groups, including the Dana Farber Cancer Institute Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia Consortium, The Consorcio Latinoamericano de Enfermedades Hemato-Oncológicas Pediátricas, the Indian Pediatric Oncology Group, and the Children's Oncology Group (COG). I am the vice-chair for COG's Hodgkin lymphoma committee, and have led multiple COG clinical trials testing innovative, targeted combination therapy for adolescents and young adults with relapsed or refractory Hodgkin lymphoma.

For full profile and biography information, [click here](#).



Global Variation in Microplastic Exposure and Cancer Disparity

Subhajyoti De, PhD

Associate Professor
Medical Informatics (Systems Biology)
Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

Dr. Subhajyoti De is a tenured Associate Professor in the Department of Pathology at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey, and a resident member of Rutgers Cancer Institute. His research group uses systems biology approaches to identify cancer-related

mutational signatures and assess the effects of genetic and environmental factors on cancer development and prognosis. His group also develops genomic applications for sensitive and low-cost, non-invasive diagnosis and cancer monitoring.

For full profile and biography information, [click here](#).



Ancestry Informative Markers in Tumor-Sequencing Data

Shridar Ganesan, MD, PhD

Associate Director for Translational Science
Section Chief, Molecular Oncology
Omar Boraie Chair in Genomic Science
Professor of Medicine
Rutgers Cancer Institute
Professor of Medicine
Rutgers Cancer Institute Medicine and Community Health

I came to The Cancer Institute of New Jersey in 2005 from the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute/Harvard Medical School where I was an instructor in medicine and staff physician. I started my medical training at Yale University, where I graduated from with both an MD and a PhD in cell biology. I then completed a medical residency at the Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston and served as a Chief Medical Resident. This was followed by a fellowship in medical oncology at the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute.

With a research interest in breast cancer biology and DNA repair, I am currently exploring how DNA repair defects in cancers can be exploited to develop novel effective treatments. I am also active in applying next-generation sequencing technology to identify specific genomic changes in cancers that can be therapeutically targeted. As a physician/scientist I both run a basic research laboratory focused on breast cancer biology and see patients in the Stacy Goldstein Breast Cancer Center. In the clinic, I work collaboratively with experts across multi-disciplines and have the opportunity to put theory into practice as we aim to develop the next generation of targeted treatments for breast cancer.

Working with a team of radiation oncologists, surgical oncologists, nurses, social workers, genetic specialists and others, I help patients understand their specific disease and their treatment options so that they can make informed decisions. He also is a critical driver of the Precision Medicine Initiative at the Cancer Institute, and has developed a research protocol in which patients with rare or difficult to treat cancers under targeted genomic sequencing to search for new potential treatment options. He has been instrumental in developing the Molecular Tumor Board at RCINJ and the new Molecular Therapeutics Clinic at Rutgers CINJ. This work has led to several novel findings that are driving both clinical trials and basic cancer research at the Cancer Institute. Also, I am a Professor of Medicine and Pharmacology at Rutgers-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, hold the Omar Boraie Chair in Genomic Science and serve as Associate Director for Translational Science at the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey.

I am the author or co-author of more than 158 publications and serve on the editorial board of the journal *Frontiers in Molecular and Cellular Oncology*.

For full profile and biography information, [click here](#).



Triple Negative Breast Cancer in Black women: The Genomic Rearrangement Landscape And Its Relationship To Obesity And Neoadjuvant Treatment Outcomes.

Coral Omene, MD, PhD

Assistant Professor of Medicine
Division of Medical Oncology
Rutgers Cancer Institute
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School

Dr. Coral Omene is a medical oncologist, specializing in breast cancer at Rutgers Cancer Institute. She has a passion for women's health and is dedicated to the care and management of a diverse pool of breast cancer patients. She began her career upon completion of a combined MD/PhD degree at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons. This was followed by an Internal Medicine residency at New York Presbyterian Hospital-Columbia University Medical Center. After residency, she pursued a fellowship at NYU School of Medicine, in the field of Hematology/Oncology, with a special interest in the area of breast cancer. In addition to taking care of breast cancer patients, she conducts

extensive translational and clinical research in breast cancer with a particular focus on the impact on cancer disparities especially in Black women. She is currently investigating the interplay with biology, obesity and treatment outcomes in both hormone receptor positive and triple negative breast cancer and the impact on cancer disparities and she has developed clinical trials in this regard. She serves as the Program Director, Breast Cancer Disparities Research at Rutgers Cancer Institute. She is a Principal Investigator for numerous clinical trials and serves on multiple national committees including as the Co-Chair of the BIG TEN Cancer Research Consortium Breast Cancer Clinical Trial Working Group.

For full profile and biography information, [click here.](#)



Cancer Genetic Risk Assessment Uptake When Cost Barrier For Genetic Counseling Was Addressed

Jinghua An, PhD, RN

Post Doctoral Fellow
Rutgers Cancer Institute
Rutgers School of Public Health

Dr. Jinghua An currently works as a postdoctoral fellow working with under the mentorship of Dr. Anita Kinney. She received a PhD in Nursing at the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2022. Dr. An's publications demonstrate her diverse research interests: cancer screening and early detection, cancer supportive care, risk communication, as well as health disparities. Her doctoral dissertation project examined individual, social, cultural, and healthcare determinants of delayed presentation in Chinese women with symptomatic breast cancer; she also adapted a Chinese Breast Cancer Beliefs Scale for measuring beliefs contributing to delaying or forgoing breast cancer screening, diagnosis, or treatment. Under the mentorship of Dr. Kinney, Dr. An is expanding her expertise in

intervention methodology, telehealth, grant development, and data analysis. Her current research involves testing the efficacy of a tailored telephone counseling and navigation intervention vs. a targeted print vs. usual care on cancer genetic risk assessment uptake at 12 months for hereditary breast and ovarian cancer, as well as examining theoretical mediators of the intervention effects. She is also involved in research activities of a body-mind training intervention (i.e., Tai Chi Qigong) that aims to improve cancer symptoms and positively impact inflammation biology and gene expression in older male cancer survivors with fatigue. She is also working with the team on a Hybrid I cluster-randomized effectiveness trial that aims to improve lung cancer screening uptake in primary care settings.

For full profile and biography information, [click here.](#)



The Geography Of Prostate Cancer Disparities.

Hari S. Iyer, ScD, MPH

Assistant Professor, Division of Med Oncology
Section of Cancer Epi and Health Outcomes
Department of Medicine
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

My research examines how the places we live influence our risk of cancer, specifically prostate cancer. We have shown that green space exposure may influence risk of lethal disease in urban settings, as well as mortality among men with prostate cancer. More recently, we have shown that favorable social environments and green space are associated with lower blood levels of inflammation, and even certain tumor-level markers of inflammation, independently of screening and other confounders. I will further develop our environmental research program through a career development award from the National Institutes of Environmental Health Sciences to develop a drinking water-based exposure model for Per- and

Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS), a forever chemical that has been linked to risk of several cancers. We also use geographic data to better understand how barriers to accessing appropriate care influences prostate cancer disparities. I co-lead a registry-based cohort of men with prostate cancer, with generous support from the Prostate Cancer Research, UK charity. We are engaging in research to study how barriers to accessing screening and treatment vary by population-level sociodemographics and neighborhood deprivation, to inform equity-based social support policies that could improve adherence to treatment and continuity of care for vulnerable populations.

For full profile and biography information, [click here.](#)



Personalized Oncology Promoting Equity for Black Lives (PROPEL)

Samuel Tundealao, BDS, MPH

Graduate Research Assistant
Rutgers Cancer Institute
Rutgers School of Public Health

Samuel Tundealao is a Rutgers Presidential Fellow and PhD Epidemiology student at the Rutgers School of Public Health under the tutelage of Dr. Anita Kinney. He obtained his dental degree (BDS) from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria, in 2019 and his Master's in Public Health (MPH) with a concentration in Epidemiology and a graduate certificate in Data Science from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston Texas in 2023. Sam previously worked on various research projects aimed at tobacco control and cancer prevention among different vulnerable populations before joining the Rutgers Cancer

Institute. Sam is currently a member of the Kinney Lab at Rutgers Cancer Institute, where he is contributing to research aimed at addressing genomic disparities among Black cancer patients and their families in the United States. His research interest focuses on addressing cancer disparities among marginalized populations such as ethnic minorities, immigrants, adolescents, young adults, and sexual and gender minority groups.

Current projects

Personalized Response on Oncology Promoting Equity for Black Lives (PROPEL)

For full profile and biography information, [click here](#).



Selected Abstract Flash Talks



Neighborhood-level SES and Demographic Disparities in Health Outcomes Among Cancer Patients Diagnosed with COVID-19 in New Jersey During 2020-2021

Susan B. German, MPH

Research Scientist
Cancer Research Program/NJ State Cancer Registry
Rutgers Cancer Institute

Susan German, MPH, has been a Research Scientist at the New Jersey State Cancer Registry (NJSCR), a department within Rutgers Cancer Institute, for the past 8 years. Ms. German has a background in epidemiology and conducts cancer epidemiology research using data from the NJSCR and other state and national data sources. Ms. German also conducts data linkages with NJSCR data for cohort studies.

Before joining NJSCR, Ms. German was a Research Associate for the Department of Preventive Medicine of Rutgers New Jersey Medical School working on CDC- and RWJF-funded public health research projects focusing on the prevention of adverse health outcomes. In addition to cancer epidemiology, Ms. German has a special interest in environmental epidemiology.

For more information about the New Jersey State Cancer Registry (NJSCR), [click here.](#)



Cigarette Relighting: A Prevalent Yet Poorly Understood Cancer Disparity

Michelle Kennedy, MPH, MCHES

Program Coordinator
Rutgers Institute for Nicotine & Tobacco Studies

Michelle Kennedy, MPH, MCHES is a research administrator with more than fifteen years of experience and has managed several R01s that cover public health topics including tobacco, food and physical activity environments, and HIV/AIDS. Currently, she is part of the technical assistance team for the NJ Quit Centers who provide tobacco treatment to residents of NJ.

Ms. Kennedy holds an MPH in Health Education/Behavioral Science from Rutgers University-School of Public Health. She is currently pursuing a DrPH in Leadership, Practice, and Research at the Rutgers-School of Public Health with research interests in nicotine, cessation, and co-occurring substance use disorders.

For more information about the Institute for Nicotine & Tobacco Studies, [click here.](#)



Selected Abstract Flash Talks



Cancer Analytics and South Asian Health – Breast Cancer Study: Updates From The Completed Pilot Phase

Jaya Satagopan, PhD

Professor, Department of Biostatistics and Epidemiology,
School of Public Health
Director, Center for South Asian Quantitative Health
and Education, School of Public Health

Jaya Satagopan completed her PhD in Statistics from the University of Wisconsin – Madison and obtained an MSc in Science Communication and Public Engagement from the University of Edinburgh. In 2019, she joined Rutgers University following a distinguished 24-year career at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. Jaya's research

focuses on statistical and computational methods to explore cancer risk factors and susceptibility. At Rutgers, she is establishing a research program dedicated to investigating breast cancer among South Asian Americans. She will present a summary of a pilot study from this initiative.

For full profile and biography information, [click here](#).



An Exploration of Social Determinants of Health and Follow-Up Care in Young Adult Cancer Survivors

Angela Senger, MS, MCM

Program Coordinator
Pediatric Population Science, Outcomes, and Disparities Research at
the Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology
Rutgers Cancer Institute

Angela Senger is a Program Coordinator in the Section of Pediatric Population Science, Outcomes, and Disparities Research at the Division of Pediatric Hematology/Oncology. She received her Master of Science degree in Clinical Psychology from Heidelberg University in Germany. She also holds a Master degree in Communication and Media from Rutgers School of Communication & Information.

Angela's research interests lie in the field of cancer survivor and provider communication and psychosocial support of adolescent and young adult cancer patients. She primarily works with Dr. Katie Devine's team in researching evidence-based behavioral interventions to improve the quality of life of cancer patients.

Before joining Rutgers Cancer Institute, she worked at Rutgers Global Health Institute where she was responsible for researching student needs in global health and overall student engagement. Angela also helped develop the institute's COVID-19 resilience program for vulnerable populations in New Jersey.

Prior to that, she was the policy, systems, and environmental change coordinator for NJ SNAP-Ed (the education arm of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program – formerly known as food stamps) where she oversaw the implementation of public health strategies and interventions across the state to increase healthy lifestyle opportunities for low-income populations.

For full profile and biography information, [click here](#).

Neighborhood-level SES and Demographic Disparities in Health Outcomes Among Cancer Patients Diagnosed with COVID-19 in New Jersey During 2020-2021

Susan German¹, Gerald Harris¹, AKM Islam¹, Lisa E. Pad-dock^{1,2}, Antoinette M. Stroup^{1,2}

1 Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, New Brunswick, NJ; 2 Rutgers School of Public Health, Piscataway, NJ

Background

Cancer patients, with weakened immune systems, face a higher risk of severe COVID-19 outcomes, such as hospitalization and death, than the general population. The New Jersey COVID-Cancer Data Repository, created by the New Jersey State Cancer Registry (NJSCR), provides a unique opportunity to investigate the impact of socioeconomic factors and demographics on patient outcomes.

Purpose

(1) To characterize disparities in health outcomes including mortality, hospitalization, and ICU admittance by race/ethnicity, sex, and SES as measured by the Area Deprivation Index (ADI) among New Jersey (NJ) residents diagnosed with cancer and COVID-19; and (2) to identify high-risk populations that would benefit from targeted interventions.

Methods

NJSCR data were linked to NJ Communicable Disease Reporting and Surveillance System (CDRSS) data to create the New Jersey COVID-Cancer Surveillance Data Repository. NJSCR data consisted of cancer cases diagnosed from 1979-2022. CDRSS data consisted of PCR-confirmed COVID-19 cases diagnosed among NJ residents during 2020-2021. ADI census block group level data were obtained from the Neighborhood Atlas website. Group differences were assessed by t-tests for continuous variables and chi-square tests for categorical variables. Statistics were generated using SAS®

Results

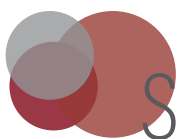
A total of 69,594 NJ cancer patients were diagnosed with COVID-19 during 2020-2021 (9.4% of all cancer patients alive at the start of 2020). We found distinct differences of COVID-19 burden and related health outcomes by race/ethnicity, sex, ADI, and cancer diagnosis characteristics. Demographic and ADI differences were observed for mortality, hospitalization, and ICU admittance. Compared with all NJ cancer patients alive at the start of 2020, those diagnosed with COVID-19 were more likely to be non-Hispanic Black or Asian. Patterns of health outcomes by SES differed among those with both COVID-19 and cancer compared to those with only cancer.

Conclusions

Elucidating the socioeconomic and demographic disparities in health outcomes among cancer patients with COVID-19 will facilitate targeted interventions aimed at mitigating morbidity and mortality risk.

Funding Acknowledgement

New Jersey State Cancer Registry is funded by the National Cancer Institute's Surveillance, Epidemiology and End Results (SEER) Program (#75N91021D00009), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Program of Cancer Registries (#NU58DP007117) with additional support from the State of New Jersey and the Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey.



Selected Abstracts

Cigarette Relighting: A Prevalent Yet Poorly Understood Cancer Disparity

Kennedy M (presenter), Steinberg MB, Young WJ, Wackowski OA, Mitarotondo A, Tomaino M, Gundersen D, Stepanov I, Hatsukami DK, Alcheva A, Heckman CJ

Rutgers Cancer Institute of NJ; Robert Wood Johnson Medical School; Institute for Nicotine and Tobacco Studies; New Brunswick, NJ.

Masonic Cancer Center, University of Minnesota; Minneapolis, MN

Background

Cigarette relighting is the practice of extinguishing, saving, and/or later smoking unfinished cigarettes. The limited research on relighting suggest that it is prevalent and may be associated with nicotine dependence, increased tobacco-related toxicants, negative health outcomes (including lung cancer), racial or ethnic minoritized status, and other social determinants of health.

Purpose

To investigate the prevalence, correlates, reasons for, and disparities of cigarette relighting in a representative national sample.

Methods

We developed a survey through expert review and cognitive testing and administered it online to a national probability sample of 2,016 adults aged 21 and over who smoke cigarettes. Topics included cigarette relighting prevalence, reasons, social determinants of health, and other potential correlates such as smoking habits and nicotine dependence.

Results

69% of respondents reported relighting cigarettes in the past 30 days, and about half (48%) do so frequently (at least several times per week) and have relit cigarettes for approximately 20 years. The most common reasons for relighting included not having time to smoke the whole cigarette (78%), trying to save money (68%), to cut down or quit smoking (45%), and to reduce harm by smoking fewer cigarettes (29%). Demographic characteristics associated with frequent relighting were being female, Black, or disabled from working, or having a high school education or less, annual income less than \$50,000, or public (rather than private) insurance. Frequent relighting was also associated with smoking longer cigarettes, e-cigarettes, marijuana, or within 30 minutes of waking (a sign of nicotine dependence). Among people who relight frequently, 40% believe relighting led to a decrease in their overall smoking. Only 2% of participants were asked by healthcare providers about relighting.

Discussion

Cigarette relighting is quite common, particularly among disenfranchised groups. Relighting could contribute to worse cessation and health outcomes if people who relight (who are more likely to be nicotine-dependent) have lower motivation toward quitting because they believe they are smoking less and reducing harm by relighting and/or their providers are not aware of their relighting. Given that the reasons for relighting include saving money, the prevalence of relighting may grow in the future with predictions of continued economic instability and may continue to disproportionately impact those with greater existing tobacco-related disparities. Assessment of relighting should be integrated into tobacco control and treatment efforts considering its prevalence, potential impact on health (including lung cancer risk) and cessation, and contribution to sustained smoking among underserved populations. Ongoing research by our team is investigating relighting impact on treatment and cessation as well as smoking topography and toxicants.

Funding: R01CA260831



Selected Abstracts

Cancer Analytics And South Asian Health – Breast Cancer Study: Updates From The Completed Pilot Phase

Jaya M. Satagopan^{1,2}, Tina Dharamdasani¹, Prachi Trivedi¹, Anusha Addanki¹, Anushyaa Vasudevan¹, Nur Zeinomar², Bo Qin², Shridar Ganesan², Caroline Morales³, Lisa Pad-dock³, Anita Y. Kinney^{1,2}, Elisa V. Bandera²

¹Rutgers School of Public Health

²Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey

³New Jersey State Cancer Registry

Background

South Asians, who are individuals from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Maldives, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka, are a growing demographic in NJ and the US. Despite their disproportionate burden of chronic diseases, including cancer, South Asian Americans (SAA) are underrepresented in health research. Rising breast cancer rates and its severity in SAA women, compounded by limited data, exacerbate health inequities. To address this, we established the Cancer Analytics and South Asian Health – Breast Cancer (CANSAH-BC) study, supported by Rutgers Cancer Institute's Cancer Health Equity Center of Excellence (CHECoE) pilot grant, to investigate aggressive breast cancer and quality of life (QoL) in SAA women and to uncover disease characteristics unique to SAA women and those shared with other populations.

Methods

We launched the pilot phase of CANSAH-BC to devise effective strategies to recruit and collect data from SAA women with breast cancer. Our objective was to enroll 100 SAA women diagnosed with breast cancer in NJ in the past 5 years at age 21 years or above. Eligible participants were sourced from the NJ State Cancer Registry (NJSCR) and through community outreach. Culturally and linguistically aligned staff conducted secure virtual or in-person interviews in English or in participants' preferred South Asian language to administer a structured questionnaire. Participants returned biospecimen in a saliva sampling kit after the interview.

Results

In December 2022, we commenced the pilot phase by collecting data from 5 eligible women identified by NJSCR. After revising study materials based on participant feedback, we resumed recruitment in March 2023 and reached our goal of 100 participants in March 2024. Of 414 eligible women identified by NJSCR, 122 (29.5.4%) agreed to be contacted, with 94 (77%) participating. An additional six participants were identified through community outreach. Two (2%) participants had in-person interviews, 2 (2%) interviewed in Hindi or Gujarati, 84 (84%) sent saliva samples, 89 (89%) had baccalaureate or higher education, and 94 (94%) were born outside the US with 83 (83%) born in India. The average age at diagnosis was 52 years (range: 29 – 77 years). Data curation, analyses, and comparisons with data from the NIH All of Us study are currently underway.

Conclusion

We successfully employed culturally and linguistically sensitive strategies to engage eligible SAA women from NJ in the pilot phase. We eagerly anticipate presenting our analyses and comparisons with the NIH All of Us study at the CHECoE symposium.

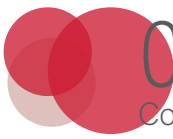


Selected Abstracts

An Exploration Of Social Determinants Of Health And Follow-Up Care In Young Adult Cancer Survivors

Angela Senger, MS, MCM, Julia Gagliardi, MBS, Anusha V. Ramji, MSc, & Katie A. Devine, PhD, MPH (Rutgers Cancer Institute of New Jersey, New Brunswick, NJ). Young adult (YA; ages 18-39 years) survivors of childhood cancer are at risk for late effects from cancer treatment including secondary malignancies. Follow-up care is therefore essential for YA survivors, however, survivorship care is often not utilized among this population. This study focused on potential barriers to accessing healthcare with an emphasis on social determinants of health (SDOH). Young adult survivors (n = 84) completed an electronic survey responding to Likert-type questions including a Disparate Health Care Quality item (extracted from the California Health Interview Survey, 2017), a single Job Lock item (Kirchhoff et al., 2017), and five items about food insecurity, financial problems, and impact on medical care (adapted from the National Health Interview Survey). Seventy percent reported having seen a doctor at least once in the last 12 months to check for health problems related to their previous cancer or cancer treatment. The majority of the remaining 30% stated they “felt ok/didn’t feel like they needed a follow-up appointment.” There were no significant

differences in obtaining care by gender or race. To the Disparate Health Care Quality item (“Overall, was there ever a time when you would have gotten better medical care if you had belonged to a different race or ethnic group?”), 67% said no, 26% were not sure, and 5% preferred not to answer. The majority (62%) reported living either comfortably or meeting needs with a little left, whereas 34% stated to “just meet basic needs.” Healthcare utilization did not differ significantly among these two groups ($\chi^2(1, N = 79) = 1.54, p = 2.14$). A small subgroup (20%) reported job lock (staying in a job to keep health insurance coverage) and delays or interruptions in their medical care due to financial concerns in the past six months (10%). Data presented are from a predominantly white (74%) sample that overall seems to be doing well regarding follow-up care. However, there seems to be a small group of YA survivors adversely impacted by insurance and income concerns that influence obtaining care and contribute to negative outcomes such as job lock. No disclosures. Acknowledgments: The study is funded by the New Jersey Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Research Center of Excellence.



Community Cancer Action Board

Community Panel Discussion



Yakima Deloatch

Consultant
Speaker
Author

Yakima Deloatch, a stage 3 triple negative breast cancer survivor diagnosed at the age of 31, has faced adversity with remarkable resilience and grace. Losing her mother to metastatic breast cancer when she was just 13, Yakima has been overcoming obstacles since childhood. She was compared to a Phoenix by the United Way of South Carolina, symbolizing her rebirth from the ashes of her challenges. From the tender age of 15, Yakima dedicated herself to breast health advocacy, culminating in her management of one of New Jersey's largest breast cancer walks for a national nonprofit organization. Her commitment to educating her community and mentoring young breast cancer survivors underscores her profound impact. As an author, she shares her powerful breast cancer journey, encouraging others with her story of

courage and hope.

Yakima's resilience has been showcased on platforms like ABC7 News, Dr. Oz, and Wendy Williams. Leveraging her corporate skills, she has transitioned into entrepreneurship, becoming a sought-after consultant, travel advisor, and motivational speaker. Through her passion project, The Pink Escape, Yakima aims to foster a global community of breast cancer survivors who travel together annually, celebrating their resilience and journey. This initiative not only enhances mental health but also helps survivors embrace their scars and stories. Yakima's dedication to living life fully and encouraging others to do the same exemplifies her indomitable spirit and unwavering commitment to making a difference.



Dorothy J. Reed

Co-Founder & President
Sister2Sister, Inc.

Dorothy J. Reed is the Co-Founder and President of Sister2Sister, Inc (S2S). She became a breast cancer survivor in 1998. After a mastectomy and treatments, Ms. Reed dedicated herself to spreading the gospel of early detection in the Minority community. In the absence of local support or culturally sensitive resources for Minority women diagnosed with the disease, Ms. Reed formed Sister2Sister in 2000 with three other breast cancer survivors.

Active in her community, some board memberships are: Robert Wood Johnson Univ. Hospital Community Relations Committee, NJ Alliance for Clinical & Translational Science Community Engagement Core Advisory Committee, and the

past Chair of Rutgers Cancer Institute - Community Cancer Action Board (CCAB).

On a national level, in 2023 and past years, she has spent extensive time on Capitol Hill meeting with congressional delegates regarding healthcare for underserved breast cancer survivors; in July 2015 Ms. Reed was selected as a White House Honoree of Precision Medicine "Champions of Change"; Ms. Reed holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree, from Pillar College, a retiree of AT&T with 30 years of service and a 45+ year member of the First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens.



Ralph Stowe

Cancer Conqueror
Gospel/Jazz pianist
Founder/CEO/Advocate/Pianist
Citizen Scientist, Certified (Rutgers Cancer Institute)

Founder/CEO of Jazz for PCA (Prostate Cancer Awareness)
Ralph is a Prostate Cancer Conqueror & Advocator of Men's wellness.

As a talented gospel and jazz pianist, he is a highly respected musician in New Jersey who provides year-round jazz-based awareness events.

Ralph has been published an Op -Ed in Star Ledger Editorial, entitled "Awareness Saves Lives" and featured in a radio interview with WBGO;

He is also a part of a Robert Wood Johnson Hospital tri-state TV commercial area, which mentions Jazz4PCA™ Rutgers Cancer Institute's community outreach campaign.



Frances Munet-Vilaró, PhD PN

Professor Emerita
Rutgers University School of Nursing

Dr. Munet-Vilaró graduated from Catholic University of Puerto Rico with a bachelor's degree in nursing (BSN), completed a master's in nursing (MS) as a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) in pediatrics at the University of Florida and a doctoral degree at the University of Washington School of Nursing, Seattle. She was a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Nursing Research Scholar at the University of California in SF where she conducted post-doctoral work in psychoneuroimmunology and the socio-cultural adaptation of families caring for a child with cancer. She received funding from HRSA and was the director of the Community Health Nursing Leadership graduate program (MSN) at the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (currently Rutgers University Biomedical and Health Sciences). She taught nursing at the undergraduate and graduate programs at Rutgers University School of Nursing.

Dr. Munet-Vilaró received funding from NIMH to study stress, coping and depression in Latino populations. She completed funded studies in HIV/AIDS prevention with migrant farm workers, health literacy of migrant Latina women in NJ and was a Co-PI in a study that examine the impact of a post physical activity program on quality of life in Latino cancer survivors in Colombia. She received funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation NJ Health Initiative to implement a Health Literacy program for monolingual Latinos in collaboration with the Ironbound Community Corporation in Newark, NJ. She is currently a consultant in various research projects: biomarkers, stress and coping in Mexican women and migrant populations from India living in NJ and the TELESCOPE research study with Rutgers Cancer Institute.

Dr. Munet-Vilaró is a Professor Emerita at the Rutgers University School of Nursing.

About the Community Cancer Action Board (CCAB)

The purpose of the Community Cancer Action Board (CCAB) is to build and foster partnerships between cancer researchers and community outreach staff and New Jersey communities. The CCAB provides input from community thought leaders and patient advocates to ensure community outreach and engagement, and research activities are informed, promote health equity and strengthen local capacity, and are responsive to community needs.

Equally, the reciprocal flow of information between researchers and outreach staff and the community build trust and mutual understanding between communities and researchers, and help ensure that values, and cultural differences among persons and communities are respected. The CCAB is a vital part of the effort to reduce the cancer burden in New Jersey communities by Rutgers CINJ and the Center for Cancer Health Equity. If you would like to be a member of the CCAB, please contact cancerhealthequity@cinj.rutgers.edu.

For more information about our CCAB, [click here](#).

Our team in the Community



Contact Us for More Information

**YOUR
SUCCESS IS
OUR GOAL!**

How Community-Research Collaboration Can Help You

Engaging communities is beneficial to your work and produces the following likely outcomes:

- More relevant research questions
- Greater recruitment success
- Increased external validity
- Greater retention of participants
- Enhanced understanding of findings

How the CHECoE Team Can Help You

We facilitate community-researcher dialogue to help enhance your research by:

- Helping researchers obtain feedback from community members that produces more impactful science
- Assisting researchers to effectively disseminate research to relevant communities
- Supporting researcher access to New Jersey (catchment area) data

CHECoE Facilitates Opportunities for Engaging with Community Members

- Community Scientist Training Program graduates
- Community Science Cafés
- Community Cancer Action Board meetings
- Catchment Area and COE Research Program Integration meetings
- Works in Progress meetings



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