

OFFICE OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

The Office of Community Outreach & Engagement within the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB is a leader in sharing vital research, education, and information regarding cancer prevention, treatment, and survivorship among medically underserved communities within our catchment area of the state of Alabama. This includes both urban and rural population centers.



WHAT WE DO

The office shares the mission of the National Cancer Institute to “develop and disseminate culturally appropriate, evidence-based cancer information that is tailored to specific needs and expectations of underserved communities.”

To accomplish this mission, we:

- Prioritize education outreach regarding cancers with the highest incidence and mortality in Alabama: breast, lung, prostate, colon, and cervical cancer.
- Promote interdisciplinary research across the cancer continuum that is relevant to our statewide catchment area.
- Support community-based lifestyle interventions targeting diet, nutrition, physical activity, tobacco control, and other behaviors that lower cancer risk and potentially improve cancer survival.
- Manage projects in more than 26 counties in all four regions of Alabama.
- Conduct local community education, patient navigation, and delivery of research interventions.
- Provide administrative oversight of day-to-day operations, including fiscal management, strategic planning, human resources, and serving as a liaison between scientists and community partners.

HOW WE SUPPORT CATCHMENT-RELEVANT RESEARCH

The Office of Community Outreach & Engagement at the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center collaborates with health care providers, administrators, policymakers and community-based nonprofit agencies to reach specific audiences within our catchment area.

The office supports researchers at the local, state, and national levels who seek to recruit participants for various studies including clinical trials, observation studies, and non-therapeutic trials.

The OCOE further assists O'Neal Cancer Center researchers by facilitating community partnerships, soliciting stakeholder input, and disseminating research findings.

OCOE proficiencies include:

- Using trained, compensated community health workers to assist with education, data collection, and delivery of research interventions.
- Managing trained, incentivized volunteer Community Health Advisors to provide limited assistance with education and data collection.
- Providing cultural competency training to project staff members working within culturally diverse populations.

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COMMUNITY HEALTH ADVISORS

A key factor in the success of the Office of Community Outreach & Engagement at the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center is the use of Community Health Advisors, also known as CHAs. The OCOE trains and supports CHAs to aid in the O'Neal Cancer Center's education and awareness initiatives.

CHAs are trusted laypeople throughout the state who share information about cancer screenings, early detection, cancer prevention, and research opportunities within medically underserved communities.

CHA roles include:

- Sharing the benefits of early cancer detection and cancer screenings.
- Helping individuals identify and remove barriers to cancer screenings.
- Answering or referring questions about screening guidelines, procedures, and other information.
- Linking cancer survivors to support services.

Over the past 20 years, the OCOE has trained more than 2,000 Community Health Advisors. CHAs play a vital role in connecting the OCOE team and researchers to specific populations within our catchment area. They also provide guidance on appropriate communication with those populations.

CHAs may receive additional training to become Community Health Advocate Research Partners, also called CHARPs, who develop, implement, and evaluate multilevel participatory research and education programs.



For more information on the Office of Community Outreach & Engagement at the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB, contact OCOE Director Claudia Hardy via email at chardy@uab.edu or via phone at **(205) 975-5454**.

To request services or a consultation from OCOE, please complete [our online interest form](#).