

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES CONNECTED AND ENGAGED

From the Director's Desk

Issue 20, December 2021

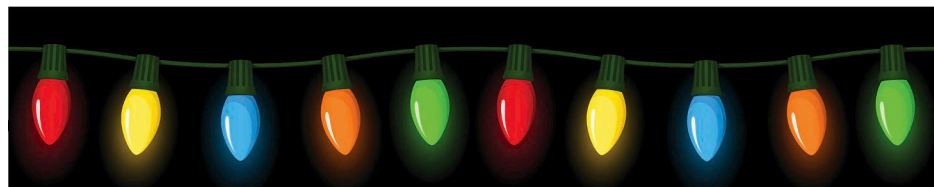
HAPPY HOLIDAYS

With 2021 concluding and 2022 dawning just ahead, I am filled with pride in the work that we have accomplished and excitement about what lies before us.

Our Community Dissemination Institute 2021 capped the year with 159 individuals in-person celebrating outreach, engagement and research.

The institute also included COE's 25th anniversary finale with a video presentation and a commemorative booklet that we will make available to you.

This was a grand reunion. And yet for others, this was your first



in-person meeting with CHAs, staff members and community partners.

Those three days of presentations and networking clearly demonstrated our commitment to eliminating disparities.

During this special time of the year, please remember to schedule your cancer

screenings, to take care of yourselves, your loved ones and remember to stay healthy.

I wish each of you a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and best wishes for 2022.

Claudia

O'NEAL COMPREHENSIVE
CANCER CENTER

UAB THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

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Holiday Word Search

X Q S A C M V O K B H K U Q H V P S E R O R S W
Z T J H K V V P Q L E D A E T N V P A H L N U O
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Joy
Fruitcake
Silent Night
Christmas Tree
Snowman
Santa
Reindeer
Toys
Carols
Warm Fireplace
Children
Baking
Gifts
Giving
Family

COMMUNITY PROFILE: COMMUNITY DISSEMINATION INSTITUTE 2021

TOGETHER AGAIN: OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT TEAM FROM FAR AND WIDE GATHERS FOR DAYS OF EDUCATION, INSPIRATION AND CELEBRATION



(Left to right) Barry Sleckman, MD, Ph.D., Director of the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, welcomes participants to the Community Dissemination Institute 2021. OCOE team members rise early for morning exercise before sessions. Bottom right, Annie Perry Smith, coordinator for Panola County, Miss., waves to the camera. Photos by Wynter Byrd.

The Community Dissemination Institute 2021 from the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement at the Marriott Shoals Conference Center in Florence, Ala. brought together community health advisors (CHAs), researchers and community partners to share information that will be taken back to communities in Alabama, Mississippi and beyond.

For many, the gathering was their first time seeing colleagues in more than 18 months as the COVID-19 pandemic prevented in-person meetings.

"There's a lot of newness here," said Jeanie Ward, a longtime CHA from Dallas County, noting the many new faces in the crowd. "To see the new ones here; they bring a lot of fresh ideas. It has been a good

fellowship, but it is also very educational."

The gathering was a first for Joan Wattenbarger, a CHA from Walker County, Ala. Wattenbarger said the sessions introduced to her new cancer awareness information, along with reinforcing her existing knowledge. All of the information is helpful in her role as a health advocate in her



Veronica Hilliard, a CHA for Jefferson County, Ala., takes a moment to sample a healthy meal during a presentation from from Chef Glenda Jones. Photo by Wynter Byrd.

community, she said.

“The information has been great,” she said. “I’m really impressed with it and would like to learn more.”

The meeting also featured a Health Equity Town Hall where O’Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center Director, Barry Sleckman, MD, PhD. and Monica Baskin, PhD., Associate Director of Community Outreach and Engagement discussed advancements, challenges and ideas regarding continued outreach in medically underserved communities.

Some of the feedback included the need to target younger populations, especially for breast and colorectal cancers.

While updates and new information were central features of the institute, there was plenty of time for friendly fellowship and celebration.

Additionally, the institute also served as the climax of the 25th

anniversary celebration. Music, balloons and the premier of a documentary and commemorative publication capped the year-long celebration.

“This year’s institute was special as both the celebration of our anniversary and physical return after a year’s hiatus due to the pandemic,” said Program Director Claudia Hardy. “It was clear from the many smiles that our time was well-spent. We left this gathering reinvigorated, united and ready for the challenges ahead to serve our communities.”

“The 25th anniversary celebration was an awesome idea which was executed to perfection,” added Dr. Karen Bolling-Walker, a coordinator for Walker County, Ala. who attended the institute for the first time.

“The opening dinner and entertainment was great. The information provided will be

useful going forward to help bridge health disparities in our underserved populations.”

Both Katie Hall, Ph.D, RN, and Angela Duck, Ph.D., RN, professors in the School of Nursing at the University of Mississippi Medical Center are OCOE partners who attended the institute for the first time.

“It is encouraging to see so much community-based research going on,” Hall said. “This is a good snapshot of all the things that the O’Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center is doing. It motivates me to find ways that we can continue this in Mississippi.”

Duck expressed a similar reaction during a break between sessions.

“It is so inspiring as a researcher to see the practical implications,” she said. “The pandemic did not inhibit the vital work that needed to be done because the need is even greater.”

Joyce Nunn, a CHA from Humphreys County Miss., has been associated with the office since the days of the Deep South Network.

“This gave me more information about different cancers to educate our people,” Nunn said, specifically mentioning lung cancer. “People aren’t aware of how dangerous lung cancer is. We need to start with the younger kids and tell them what to do and what not to do.”

AS THE ALCASE PROJECT CONCLUDES, OCOE TEAM AND ADVOCATES REMAIN COMMITTED TO LUNG CANCER SCREENING AND AWARENESS

Advocates for lung cancer awareness and screening continued their work into the final hours of the formal program that took them to seven counties around Alabama.

The Alabama Lung Cancer Awareness, Screening and Education (ALCASE) project has officially concluded, yet the commitment remains strong to continue education and outreach efforts regarding lung cancer screening.

ALCASE was a joint project between the GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer and the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Community health advisors from the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement focused on Choctaw, Marengo, Greene, Hale, Sumter, Dallas and Jefferson Counties to increase awareness of lung cancer risk and screening opportunities.

Those efforts resulted in 293 people being educated about lung cancer screening and evaluated for eligibility for lung cancer screening. More than 40 people went through the entire process and received low-dose CT scans.

"This work is important as we try to educate as many people as possible about lung cancer, their risks, and show them how simple it is to be screened," said Tara Bowman, Program Manager for Community Engaged



Kathy Levy, Project Manager for ALCASE, Tara Bowman, Program Manager for Community Engaged Research, and Kim Parker-Coleman, Sumter County Coordinator, display ALCASE screening information during the Community Dissemination Institute 2021. Photo by Wynter Byrd.

Research Support at the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement. "Each person we have reached represents not just themselves, but also their families and loved ones. Our staff and community health advisors have impacted lives through this program."

Men and women who are 55 and older and who are current or former smokers are urged to get a low-dose CT. The screenings are covered by most insurance plans including Medicaid and Medicare if a person is considered high risk.

OCOE efforts also included engaging primary care doctors in the region, assisting with

transportation, and conducting follow-up surveys to learn more about the screening experience.

While screenings provide the greatest chance for finding and treating the disease early, only 4 percent of people nationally are screened each year.

"Lung cancer remains one of our primary cancers for the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement, and we will remain focused on educating as many people in our communities about prevention, risks and testing," Bowman said.

UNSTOPPABLE: A LOOK AT SOME OF THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS FROM OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT IN 2021

Not even the constraints of social distancing and virtual meetings were strong enough to slow progress at the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement in 2021. The addition of new team members, partners, projects and the completion of other major initiatives made this year among one of the most robust for Outreach and Engagement.

- The celebration of our silver anniversary was both a time of reflection and planning for the future. A series of virtual events brought back pioneers of the office who helped shape our foundation. The series also provided an opportunity to illustrate how community outreach is integrated into the advancement of science and research on cancer and health disparities.
- Research remained at the forefront in 2021 as OCOE and the Experimental Therapeutics Research Program collaborated on a year-long pilot program to support four basic science research grants totaling \$324,000. Each researcher was awarded an individual or research team grant, ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000 in pilot funding to investigate various cancer-related topics.
- A focus on patient navigation was highlighted with the creation of a new full-time staff position dedicated to assisting community members in finding the medical care needed. Silvia Gisiger-Camata joined the OCOE staff as Program Lead for the Prevention and Care Navigation. Gisiger-Camata, who is also a registered nurse with a Bachelor's in Pharmacy and a Master's



The O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Photo by Andrea Mabry.

Degree in Public Health, plays an integral role in integrating COE with the Cancer Service Line and Clinical Trials Office.

- The team this year completed a study with the Mike Slive Foundation for Prostate Cancer Research focused on ways to increase prostate cancer screening among Black men. Researchers examined factors that encourage African American men to get screened for prostate cancer and the factors that discouraged them. The OCOE will continue to work with the Mike Slive Foundation, the Urology Health Foundation and other partners to promote awareness and connect men to screening and care.
- The Chronic Disease & Health Disparities Program delivered education outreach activities that focused on cancer survivors and

people with heart disease or diabetes who were 50 and older through Harvest for Health. The goals of promoting healthier diet, encouraging physical activity and improving physical functioning remained the same under the expanded program led by Monica Baskin, Ph.D., associate director for Community Outreach & Engagement at the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Fresh, home-grown vegetables became more plentiful in counties across Alabama and Mississippi. Harvest for Health had proven successful in other areas such as increasing fruit and vegetable intake, increasing physical function and providing an opportunity for exercise and physical activity. This work is also a partnership with investigators from the Univ. of Mississippi Medical Center and the

Mississippi State University, along with the Alabama Cooperative Extension System and Mississippi Cooperative Extension Services.

- The O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center joined a national initiative to combat racial inequity and bias in cancer care. Co-Creating Solutions to Address Racism and Disparities in Oncology, is a national project funded by the Center for Health Care Strategies. The project will identify ways to improve partnerships between health care systems and community agencies to address racial and ethnic disparities in cancer care.

This project will also highlight ways that health care systems may lessen the impact of institutional bias and racism in cancer care that negatively affects communities of color. The Cancer Center is partnering with the Jefferson County Faith Based Alliance for the Advancement of Health Equity and the UAB Health System.

- The O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center joined with the GO2 Foundation for Lung Cancer to increase African American participation in lung cancer clinical trials.

The study, Studying Trial Determinants of Success (STRIDES), funded by grants awarded to GO2 Foundation from Genentech and Bristol Myers Squibb, aims to help researchers better understand barriers to clinical trial participation among African American patients. Researchers will also develop programs to increase clinical trial participation among African American patients.

The second part of the study will use those lessons learned to select and pilot different evidence-based initiatives to increase the participation of African American patients in clinical trials.

UAB was among three institutions selected to receive funding support from a pool of nearly 380 applicants.

Participants needed for the Home-Based Cervical Cancer Screening Study

Are you?

- ◆ An Alabama resident? *and*
- ◆ Between the ages 30-64? *and*
- ◆ No Pap test or other cervical cancer screening in the last 3.5 years? *and*
- ◆ African American *or* live in a rural area?

**You may be eligible for this study!
Enrollment is open for Fall 2021**

This study uses a human papillomavirus (HPV) testing kit to screen for cervical cancer.

The kit will be delivered to your home for free. The test is similar to inserting a tampon, and only takes a few minutes.

A short questionnaire about the test kit and related health topics is included.

Participants will receive a \$25 giftcard for answering the questionnaire and a \$25 giftcard for completing the testing kit.

For more information. please contact our team

(205) 490-5767 *M-F 12pm to 4pm*

sites.uab.edu/hpvstudy

GRP-HPVstudy@uab365.onmicrosoft.com

Holiday Word Search

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SNAPSHOTS: MORE SCENES FROM THE COMMUNITY DISSEMINATION INSTITUTE 2021



Dr. Meghan Tipre, Dr. Monica Baskin, and Dr. Barry Sleckman share a moment during opening celebrations for the Community Dissemination Institute 2021. Photo by Wynter Byrd.



Pearlette Edwards, coordinator for Bullock County, Ala. gets the crowd motivated and moving during a Richard Simmons styled "Sweating to the Oldies" stretch break. Photo by Wynter Byrd.



Glenda Jones, a kitchen coach and personal chef who specializes in healthy food options, demonstrates how to prepare several dishes during a workshop. Jones is also a member of the Community Advisory Board. Photo by Wynter Byrd.



Charles Latham, a member of the Community Advisory Board, wows the crowd as he shows off his harmonica skills during the opening celebration dinner for the Community Dissemination Institute 2021 in Florence, Ala. Photo by Wynter Byrd.



Claudia Hardy, Program Director for the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement, presents during the Community Dissemination Institute 2021. Photo by Wynter Byrd.



Justin Pope, a member of the Community Advisory Board, and Kathy Levy, Choctaw County, Ala. Coordinator, energize the crowd during the Sunday opening session as they serve as hosts for hours of throwback music, games and laughs. Photo by Wynter Byrd.

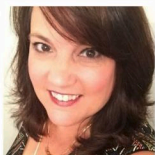
UPCOMING EVENTS

IT'S NOT TOO LATE THERE'S STILL TIME TO GET SCREENED

Don't let the year end without getting your recommended screenings. Delayed screenings can be detrimental to your health. Remember, early detection saves lives.

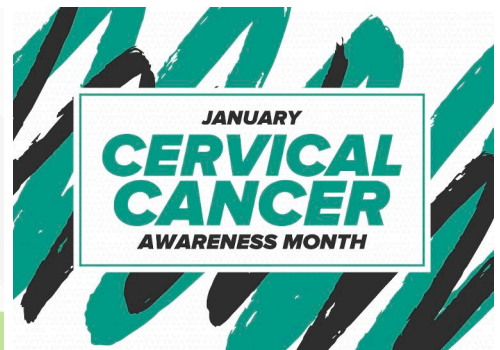
DEC. 6, 2021
AT 5:30 PM

REGISTER:
GO.UAB.EDU/COE-TIME
JOIN VIA CONFERENCE CALL OR ZOOM



Guest Speaker: Kimberly Williams
Cancer Control Strategic Partnerships Manager
American Cancer Society

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**Coming in January:
Helpful information
and stories of
inspiration in efforts
to prevent, screen,
treat and survive
cervical cancer.**