

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES CONNECTED AND ENGAGED

From the Director's Desk

Issue 22, February 2022

NATIONAL CANCER PREVENTION MONTH

February is National Cancer Prevention Month.

While no person can eliminate every risk factor that makes them susceptible to cancer, there are still steps everyone can take to make it less likely they will develop cancer.

Regular colorectal cancer screening is a strong tool to prevent colorectal cancer by finding and removing precancerous cells early. Cervical cancer can be prevented with the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine and regular screening tests.

February 4 is World Cancer Day, an annual observance that raises



awareness to improve education and call for action to end preventable cancer deaths worldwide.

The theme for the next three years is “Close the Care Gap” to help make cancer treatments equitable for everyone.

Each of you is working to close this gap by providing essential

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Prevention Month

information on cancer screening, treatment and prevention all across our service areas.

In closing, please remember to do all you can to keep you and your families healthy as we continue to live through the pandemic.

Thank you,

Claudia



COMMUNITY OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

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HOW TO HELP PREVENT CANCER

FROM THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION:

- Quit smoking and stay away from secondhand smoke. Tobacco use can cause cancer throughout the body — not just lung cancer.
- Keep a healthy weight and exercise regularly.
- Being overweight is linked with at least 13 kinds of cancer.
- Ask your doctor if you are due for a cancer screening test. If so, ask how to get it.

Let's help create a future free of cancer for yourself, your family and your community.

COMMUNITY PROFILE: PATRICIA GULLETTE



Patricia Gullette, a community outreach coordinator for the Office of Community Outreach & Engagement, uses her skills to reach audiences throughout Macon County, Alabama.

GULLETTE REACHES ACROSS GENERATIONS TO DELIVER CANCER, HEALTH EDUCATION IN MACON COUNTY, ALABAMA

Patricia Gullette has a keen ability to get people to talk to her about some of their most personal health concerns.

The retired nurse and Macon County, Alabama, community outreach coordinator for the Office of Community Outreach & Engagement at the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB uses her gift of relatability to engage audiences in her

community about cancer awareness, screening and prevention.

From churches to laundromats, and even college dormitories – Gullette never passes on an opportunity to connect with audiences of various ages.

Gullette has found particular success on the campus of nearby Tuskegee University, where she became a frequent and

popular presence.

“This is a different age group and this is a different generation, but I do have a knack for learning how to reach people that I’m trying to teach,” said Gullette, who began her association with OCOE as a Community Health Advisor in 2001. “And I don’t have problems asking them their personal information. Once I get that dialog going, then I can teach. I would

leave my contact information, and they would typically call me back.”

Gullette leveraged her relationships with dorm counselors and leaders at Tuskegee University to deliver small group presentations to students. Her focus included cervical cancer awareness, sexually transmitted diseases and the HPV vaccine to prevent cervical cancer and other cancers.

Word spread about Gullette’s campus presentations, and more and more began to participate.

“They were actually interested in what we were saying,” Gullette recalled. “It was because I knew dorm counselors and directors. I’m a part of the community. That’s what made it easy.”

Following COVID-19 safety protocols, Gullette moved her discussions to virtual zoom meetings. Yet the audience remained.

“I counted it as a success if the students learn, if the students get what they need, and if a student tells another student, ‘You can talk to Ms. Gullette, and she can get you what you need,’” she said.

Most recently, Gullette is working with the At-Home Home Based Cervical Cancer Study. The study seeks to assess the feasibility of a home-based, self-collected HPV testing kit.

“When I retired, one of the things I told my friends was that I was retiring from going to work every day but I was not retiring from

nursing,” Gullette said.

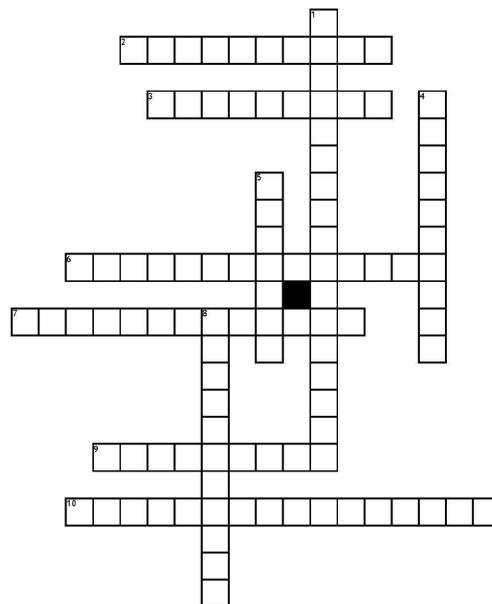
She laughs when remembering the nickname a neighbor gave her – “Dr. Pat.”

The neighbor had gone to the doctor at Gullette’s direction, then returned home with some of the same official advice that Gullette had predicted.

She also shares monthly cancer awareness activities at her church, Greater St. Mark Missionary Baptist, in Tuskegee, and among her friends.

“What’s next is just to meet the challenges of the programs that I take a part in as best as I can,” she said. “Once I have a challenge, I do what I can to meet it.”

Cancer Prevention Month



Across

- 2. Used to protect people from types of HPV which can cause cervical and other cancers
- 3. Process of looking for cancer in people with no symptoms
- 6. This saves lives
- 7. Recommended as screening used to detect lung cancer
- 9. Recommended for women at the age of 40 for screening

- 10. Recommend 150 minutes of this weekly to help lower cancer risks

Down

- 1. Type of exam used to check for abnormalities with the prostate and screening
- 4. Number one cause of cancer death
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- 8. Screening recommended to detect polyps/abnormalities to prevent colorectal cancer

THE RESEARCH CORNER

AMPLIFY STUDY SEEKS CANCER SURVIVORS TO BETTER UNDERSTAND HOW EXERCISE AND DIET IMPROVE OVERALL HEALTH, QUALITY OF LIFE



**New Study Enrolling
Cancer Survivors Age 50+**

Are you a cancer survivor
interested in losing weight?

The AMPLIFY research study is
looking for YOU!

Contact us at 1-833-535-7934
or visit amplifymyhealth.org/info

Join the more than 150 people
who are already enrolled!

@amplifyurvivorhealth
 @amplify.survivor.health

A major research study by the O’Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB seeks to better understand the benefits of a healthy eating and exercise program for cancer survivors.

The AMPLIFY study, which stands for Aim Plan and Act on Lifestyles, aims to help cancer survivors eat healthy foods and get sufficient exercise to improve overall health. Through the web-based program, AMPLIFY researchers want to learn more about how healthy eating and exercise can be used to improve health.

AMPLIFY will be recruiting participants until next fall. Participants will be enrolled in one of three year-long lifestyle programs to learn to eat better, exercise more and achieve a

healthy weight.

Health experts already note that healthy eating and exercise are important for cancer survivors to maintain a healthy weight, live longer and reduce the chance of getting other kinds of cancer or chronic diseases, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

AMPLIFY is open to women and men who:

- Are age 50 and older
- Have had breast cancer, colorectal cancer, prostate cancer, ovarian cancer, endometrial (uterine) cancer, kidney cancer, thyroid cancer, Non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma or multiple myeloma

- Currently exercise less than 150 minutes a week.
- Want to lose weight

The AMPLIFY team seeks to bring evidence-based research to communities that need it most in order to enhance the health of cancer survivors.

It is led by Wendy Demark-Wahnefried, Ph.D., R.D., associate director for Cancer Prevention & Control at the O’Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center.

The Office of Community Outreach and Engagement will provide research support to AMPLIFY by assisting with identifying cancer survivors who may qualify to participate.

Demark-Wahnefried called it

essential that the study is diverse and is accessible to all eligible survivors. The study also seeks to tackle health disparities that exist among cancer survivors.

"African American cancer survivors have poorer outcomes after a cancer diagnosis. That means poorer survival of their cancer, but also poorer survival from other diseases for which cancer survivors are at risk, namely heart disease," Demark-Wahnefried explained. "In addition, African American cancer survivors are more likely to be debilitated after their diagnosis. This program can get them back on their feet and keep them from becoming dependent on others."

Because the AMPLIFY program is delivered and evaluated totally via the internet, cancer survivors can participate from the comfort of their home. AMPLIFY will also lend computer tablets and provide internet hot spot service to participants who lack access.

"Getting the word out through the COE will help us overcome key barriers that prevent us from serving the cancer survivors most in need and who lack access to state of the art support, i.e., survivors of minority groups and those who reside in rural areas," Demark-Wahnefried said.

Cancer survivors or people who know of survivors who might be interested in participating in the AMPLIFY study should call (833) 535-7934 or email: amplify@uabmc.edu.

Additional details may also be found at amplifymyhealth.org and on Facebook at facebook.com/AmplifySurvivorHealth.



Close the care gap



World
Cancer Day
4 February

Join us on 4 February.
worldcancerday.org

LONGTIME OCOE COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS BOLSTER CANCER OUTREACH & EDUCATION EFFORTS IN THE DELTA



Left: Jackie Hawkins is a longtime partner of the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement, now through Delta Community Solutions. Right: Ann Littleton, board member and secretary of the Delta Alliance for Congregational Health, is also a community resource in the Mississippi Delta.

Strong community-based partnerships are essential to reaching key audiences and providing essential health information to those who need it most.

Among its partners in the Mississippi Delta, the Office of Community Outreach & Engagement collaborates with Jackie Hawkins of Delta Community Solutions, and Ann Littleton of the Delta Alliance for Congregational Health (DAC). Both organizations provide OCOE trusted access to communities.

Hawkins' relationship with OCOE goes back to the early years of the office where she participated in the Deep South Network for Cancer Control when the program was a collaboration between the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the University of Southern Mississippi. Hawkins was

Regional Coordinator at the University of Southern Mississippi.

She called her Deep South Network participation the beginning of a new focus on community engagement.

"I worked on that project for a number of years and, in the meantime, still tried to maximize my skills," she recalled. "I really became interested in community engagement and being that servant and making those connections."

Hawkins later became Community Bureau Director of the Mississippi Delta Health Collaborative through the Mississippi State Department of Health. Her personal and professional connections to the region also proved invaluable as OCOE expanded its community reach.

"I've maintained a great

relationship with them and, at times, have been able to connect a lot of people and resources," she said.

Hawkins maintained her involvement with OCOE following the Deep South Network, working on several community-based research projects. She continued her association with OCOE even after officially retiring in 2018 and founding her own organization, Delta Community Solutions.

The relationship eventually expanded to include the Delta Alliance for Congregational Health, a faith-based organization in which both Hawkins and Littleton serve as leaders and members of the board of directors.

Church members are trained as health advocates to promote health in the Mississippi Delta dealing with 18 counties," said Littleton, a resident of Greenville in

Washington County, Mississippi. “Churches are the gathering places in the black community. Then people from the churches spread the messages to their neighbors, and that helps us get the word out.”

While the pandemic forced most activities to transition from in-person to virtual, the work has not stopped, Littleton said.

For example, Littleton worked with OCOE in the Chronic Disease and Health Disparities Program. The program was designed to address health disparities in Alabama and Mississippi.

Littleton is already planning for future collaboration and expansion of services with OCOE.

“I am hopeful that, when UAB has some other activities or work that we can assist with, we will be able to build on what we already have and continue to learn from what UAB is doing in the counties in Alabama and in the counties in the Delta of Mississippi.”

Hawkins also envisions a continued and expanding relationship with OCOE.

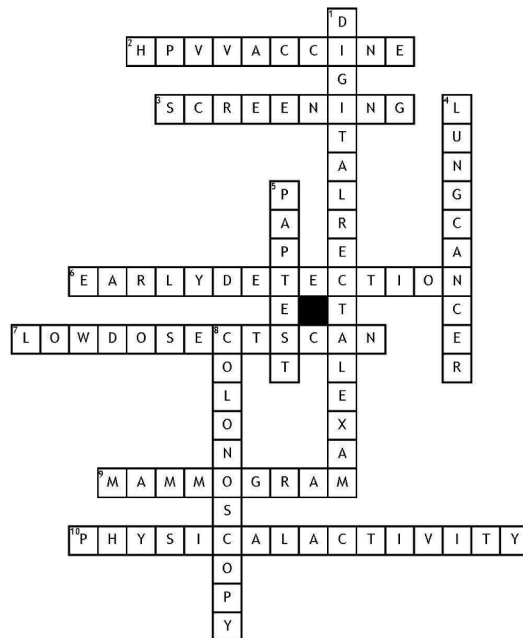
“I’m doing a lot of work around health equity, looking at black and brown communities. I also want to

get further involved in educating and serving the LGBTQ community,” she said, naming a few priorities. “I do see where there are so many gaps in our communities.

A lifelong resident of Greenwood, Mississippi, and Leflore County, Hawkins said she always felt a calling to use her skills for the betterment of her own region.

“I wanted to be here and be part of the change and make things happen right here for my own people,” Hawkins said. “Everybody wants to live a prosperous life, regardless of where they live.”

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UPCOMING EVENTS



Cancer Prevention and the HPV Vaccine

February is Cancer Prevention Month. Join us as we learn how the HPV vaccine is making a vital impact on preventing cancer.



Guest Panelist:

Veronica L. Wehby-Upchurch
Program and Communications Manager,
Vax 2 Stop Cancer



FEB 7

5:30 PM

Join via Zoom or conference call
Register: go.uab.edu/coe-HPV

Get ready for March when the Office of Community Outreach & Engagement will present essential information about colorectal cancer, multiple myeloma and ways to educate and empower our communities.

O'NEAL COMPREHENSIVE
CANCER CENTER
UAB THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM



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