

Community Connections



KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES CONNECTED AND ENGAGED

From The Director's Desk

Issue 12, March 2021

SPRINGTIME IS ARRIVING

I walked outside recently and saw a bee buzz by, likely heading to freshly blooming flowers nearby. Spring at last has arrived. After seemingly endless days of freezer-like temperatures, it feels good to finally walk in the sunshine. Activity at the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement also remains abuzz. March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness and Multiple Myeloma Awareness Month.

Colorectal cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer-related deaths in men, and is the third-leading cause of cancers affecting both men and women, colorectal cancer is the second leading cancer killer in the United States and the third most commonly diagnosed cancer in men and in women, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Those numbers clearly illustrate why the work that you do support cancer education and screening is so important. We are making great strides, and our efforts must continue in our



COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS

existing communities and beyond. Multiple Myeloma is among our newest impact cancers at OCOE. The rare blood cancer is more than twice as common in African Americans. We continue to celebrate our 25th anniversary with a series of virtual activities where we highlight our beginning, celebrate our successes, and discuss plans for our future. In March we will have the second part of the discussion of the "Birth of the Community Health Advisor Program."

One hour in February just wasn't enough to tell the story of the most impactful program offered by our office.

The headlines and news reports are starting to give us more hope, but please continue to be safe by following the recommendations of health leaders and practicing social distancing.

Lastly, don't forget to take some time for yourself and enjoy the beautiful sights and sounds of our changing season.

– *Claudia*

O'NEAL COMPREHENSIVE
CANCER CENTER

UAB THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

COMMUNITY
OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

Claudia Hardy – Program Director
chardy@uab.edu

Tara Bowman – Program Manager
tbowman@uab.edu

Rochelle Wallace – Health Initiatives Manager
rlw365@uab.edu

Joseph D. Bryant – Newsletter Editor
josephbryant@uab.edu

Community Advisory Board Member Charles Latham tapped to serve on Mike Slive Foundation Board



Charles Latham, a member of the Community Advisory Board at the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center was recently selected to serve on the board of directors for the Mike Slive Foundation for Prostate Cancer Research.

Latham's position enhances his ongoing advocacy for prostate cancer awareness, screening and treatment. The Grenada, Mississippi native is a survivor of prostate cancer.

As a member of the Office of Community Outreach & Engagement's Prostate Cancer Working Group, Latham advises in a study funded by the Mike Slive Foundation to develop culturally appropriate messages and tools to increase prostate cancer screening rates among African American men.

COMMUNITY PROFILE

KEEPING IT MOVING: DIAL PARTICIPANT REACHES MILESTONE, SETS EXAMPLE ON HER PATH TO BETTER HEALTH

Sonja Johnson is always looking to take one extra step toward better health and an improved quality of life.

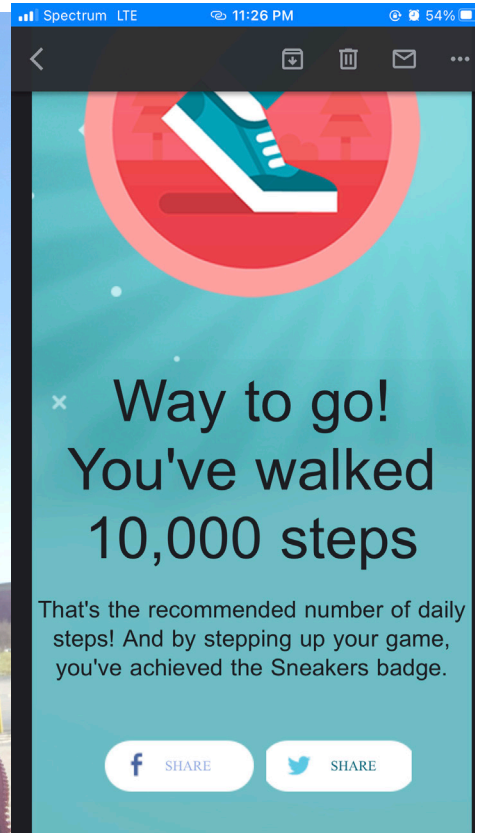
And when Johnson says “keep it moving” she means it literally. “I’m not going to stop,” Johnson said. “My goal is 10,000 steps every day.”

The Dallas County resident is a standout member of the DIAL program. The Deep South IVR-supported Active Lifestyle or simply, DIAL, includes participants in Sumter, Dallas, Green, Hale, Marengo and Choctaw Counties.

Participants receive either a Fitbit or a pedometer, device that counts steps, along with continued health information and support from staff members. DIAL participants also receive automated phone calls to encourage them to increase their physical activity. IVR or Interactive Voice Response is the process of using phone calls and automated messaging.

DIAL is designed to encourage residents in Alabama’s Black Belt Region to exercise more.

The program is led by Dr. Dori Pekmezci, Associate Professor in the Department of Health Behavior at the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Public Health.



Messages on Sonja Johnson's Fitbit activity tracker provide details of her progress along with positive messages that encourage her to continue moving. Johnson, of Dallas County, is a member of the DIAL project.

Office of Community Outreach & Engagement community coordinators help present the project to local communities.

Johnson has turned the DIAL program into a competition to push herself more each day. Johnson recently made her goal of 10,000 daily steps.

“I feel accomplished, I really do,” she said “And I have the drive.” It was a proud moment that was hard earned and not free from frustration. Johnson said the DIAL team encouraged her with her fitness goals.

“I had some stumbling blocks, though,” she said. “I tried, and I tried, and I tried, but I could never get to that 10,000 steps,” Johnson said.

After a few adjustments to the technology, including replacing her pedometer with a Fitbit, a watch-styled fitness tracker, Johnson was on her way.

The change made the difference, mainly because Johnson could easily look on her wrist and see her progress. And the messages continued to urge her to take the next step

“The motivation of being able to see it helped a lot. It’s good motivation,” she said. “It would say ‘feed me,’ or ‘10 more to go.’”

Johnson said positive messages on the device and encouragement from the staff urged her to continue moving and extending her path even further.

“I really wanted to quit, but those ladies really helped,” she said.

While Johnson credits DIAL staff for their motivation, they call her the real inspiration.

“Ms. Johnson has been very committed to the DIAL Study,” said Chi Okeke, Dallas County Coordinator for the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement. “I am so proud of her progress and inspired by her journey to wellness.”

DIAL will help UAB health researchers understand how automated systems help encourage exercise, and how similar programs could be expanded in other rural communities. Any example of its success will certainly include the story of Sonja Johnson.

“Sonja is one of our participants who has truly been committed to the program and to achieving her fitness goals,” said program manager Sh’Nese Townsend.



Dori Pekmezi Ph.D.

“She set a personal goal earlier this month to hit the DIAL Study step goal of 10,000 and she did it.

We are so proud of Sonja’s accomplishments and we look forward to sharing in the successes of all of our participants, both large and small, over the coming years.”

Johnson’s stamina has increased. She also sees physical evidence of her progress with her losing

25 pounds since joining Dial last September.

Johnson has an even greater reason to stay on her path of physical fitness. “I have grandchildren that I want to be around for,” she said. “That is another thing that helps me stay motivated.”

DIAL is seeking to expand in Marengo County. Staff will actively recruit for participants on April 17.

For more information about DIAL and to participate, please email DialStudy@uab.edu or 205-934-7145.

Would you like to participate in a UAB research study on physical activity in rural counties?



- Adults living in Marengo County are eligible
- Looking for people currently NOT physically active to participate
- Participants will receive physical activity counseling by phone for 12 months at no cost.
No travel to UAB required.

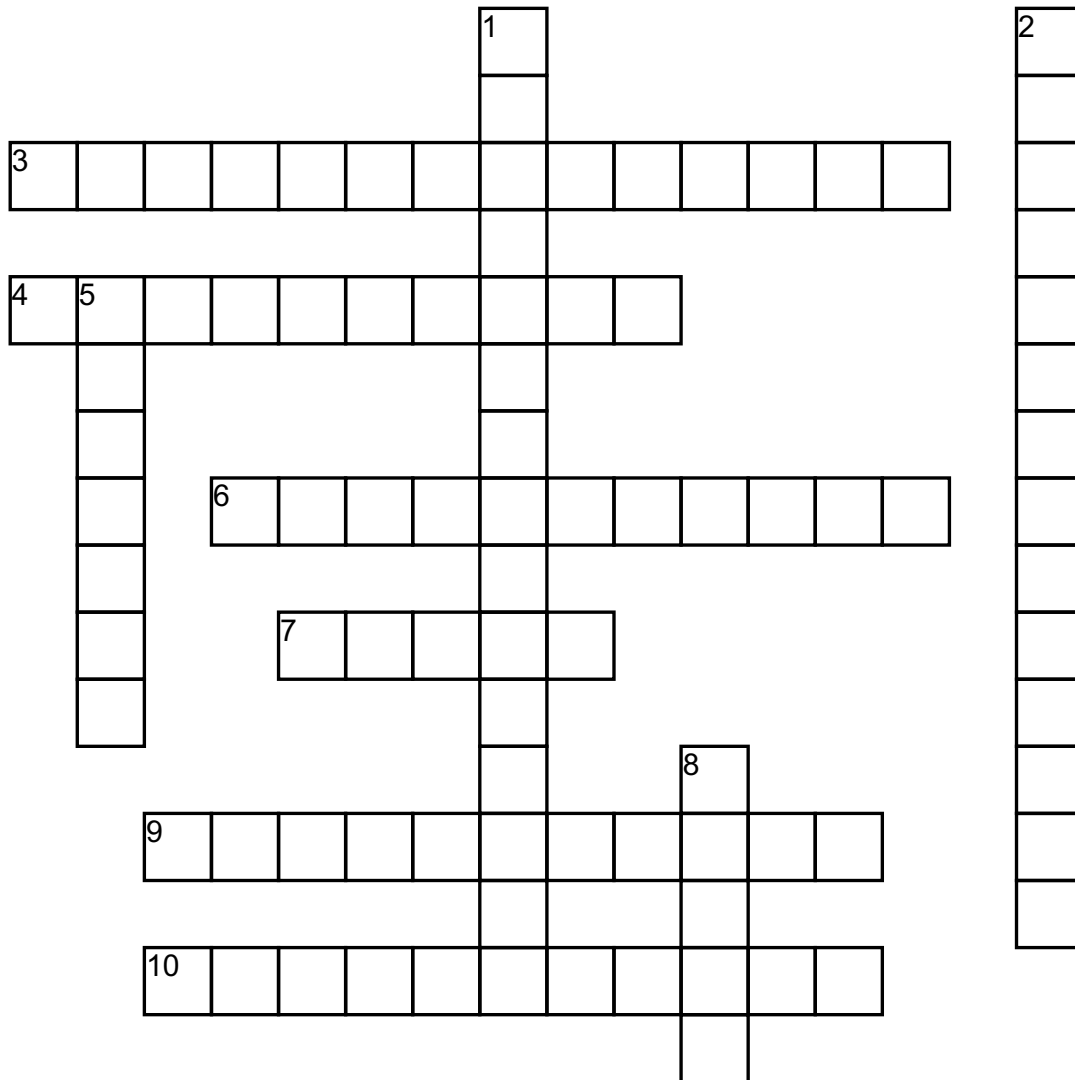
Call 205-407-3313 if you think you are eligible and would like to participate. We will ask you a few questions during the call to ensure you qualify.

Participants receive:

- Compensation up to \$250
- Fitbit or Pedometer
- Health and physical activity support
- Connection within their community to individuals with similar health goals

To learn more,
please call
205-407-3313
and speak
with a staff
member.

March Cancer Awareness



Across

- 3. _____ is cancer of the cervix.
- 4. Vaccine used to prevent cervical cancer
- 6. Colorectal cancer is _____
- 7. A precancerous growth that may be found in the colon.
- 9. Screening tool used to detect colorectal cancer.
- 10. Obesity and smoking are two linked to cancer and other chronic diseases.

Down

- 1. A rare blood cancer.
- 2. _____ saves lives.
- 5. A test used to detect changes in the cervix.
- 8. Colorectal cancer is cancer of the _____.



UNDERSTANDING MULTIPLE MYELOMA

Multiple myeloma is a rare blood cancer with common symptoms that are often overlooked.

Join us to learn more about this disease via conference call or Zoom.



GUEST SPEAKER:

Dr. Kelly Godby
UAB Division of Hematology & Oncology

TUESDAY
MARCH 16, 2021
12 PM (NOON) CST

REGISTER: GO.UAB.EDU/COE-MM1

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

COLORECTAL CANCER BASICS

Colorectal cancer is **preventable**, yet it is the third-leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States.

Join us via conference call or Zoom to learn more on how you can prevent this disease.

MONDAY
MARCH 8, 2021
12 P.M. (NOON) CST



GUEST SPEAKER:

Jamie A. Cannon, M.D., FACS
Program Director
UAB Colorectal Surgery Fellowship



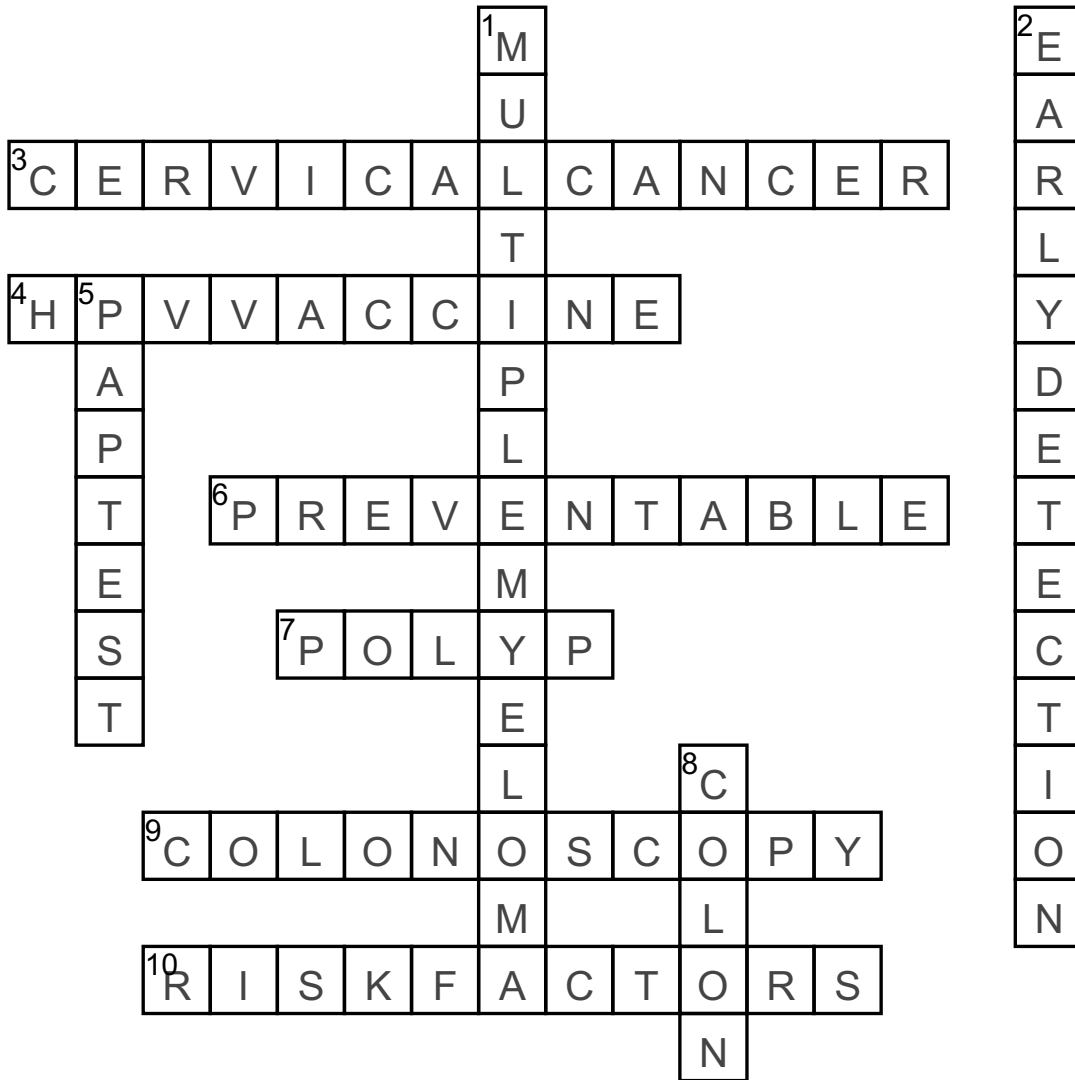
REGISTER: GO.UAB.EDU/COE-COLORECTAL

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

Source:
American Cancer Society

ANSWER KEY

March Cancer Awareness



Across

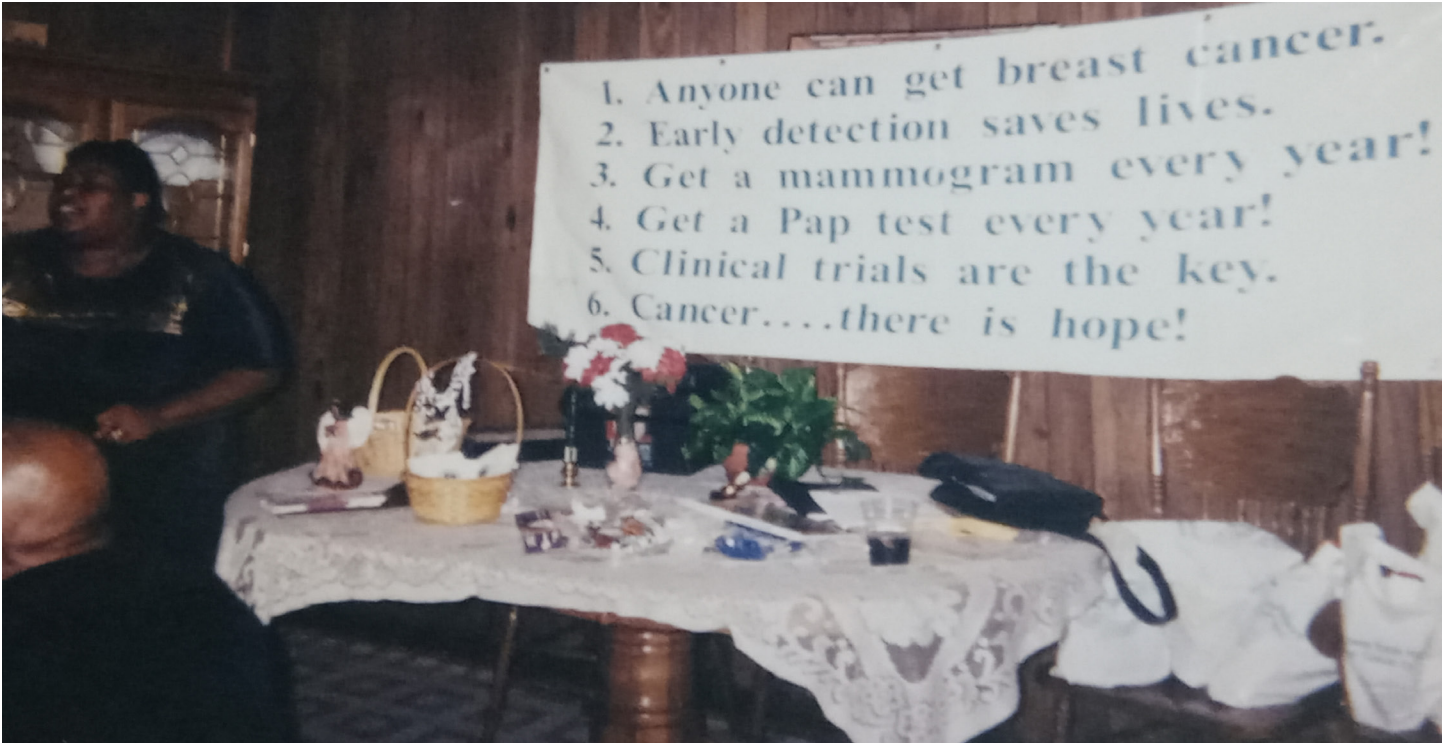
- _____ is cancer of the cervix.
- Vaccine used to prevent cervical cancer
- Colorectal cancer is _____
- A precancerous growth that may be found in the colon.
- Screening tool used to detect colorectal cancer.
- Obesity and smoking are two linked to cancer and other chronic diseases.

Down

- A rare blood cancer.
- _____ saves lives.
- A test used to detect changes in the cervix.
- Colorectal cancer is cancer of the _____.

CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF OUTREACH & ENGAGEMENT

OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT ANNIVERSARY CONTINUES WITH SECOND SPOTLIGHT ON COMMUNITY HEALTH ADVISOR PROGRAM



OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT 

As we mark 25 year of the Office of Outreach and Community Engagement, we want to hear from CHAs who have served 20 years or more. Please contact your local county coordinator. We plan to spotlight you in coming months.

The Office Community Outreach and Engagement continues to mark its 25th anniversary with a series of virtual events that highlight the past, the present and the future of cancer and education efforts.

The founding and evolution of the

community health advisor program will be discussed during "Birth of the Community Health Advisor Program Part II" on Monday, March 22 at 5:30 p.m.

An hour-long session in February session wasn't enough time to summarize a quarter of a century of

the CHA program and its impact on thousands of individuals.

In the early years, both resources were limited and funding was precious, yet the commitment and determination to make a difference remained endless. The March event will focus on the

CHA structure utilizing regional coordinators, development of CHA education and messaging, and CHAs who have who have been with the office for 20 years or more.

The event will be presented on Zoom and will also be available by conference call.

Stay up to date

with all the activities and news at the O'Neal Cancer Center and the Office of Community Engagement & Outreach. Follow us:

ON THE WEB
go.uab.edu/oneal-coe-news



@ONealCancerCenteratUAB



@ONealCancerUAB



@onealcanceruab

O'NEAL COMPREHENSIVE
CANCER CENTER

UAB THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM