

Community Connections



KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES CONNECTED AND ENGAGED

From The Director's Desk

Issue 6, September 2020

PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

The view from my desk has not changed since March. Spring and summer are behind us. Fall is quickly approaching as we continue to experience a “new normal” under the COVID-19 pandemic.

I have been impressed by the resiliency that each of us has had during this unprecedented time. We’ve all taken lemons and made lemonade.

September is also Prostate Cancer Awareness Month. We are excited to bring you two opportunities to learn more about the impact of prostate cancer in our state, including its high incident rate among African American men. We hope that you each of you will participate in our ongoing monthly educational webinars.



This month is extra special as we open these virtual sessions to the general public. Invite a friend and let’s learn together.

We are working hard to include more information on our website, go.uab.edu/oneal-coe-news where you may download or share at your convenience. Of course, we still have printed materials available,

so contact us at coeinfo@uab.edu or 205-975-0003. Please allow 10 business days for your request whenever possible. We welcome your feedback and suggestions on how we may continue to engage you.

– *Claudia*

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

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Prostate Cancer Awareness Month

T	R	I	S	K	F	A	C	T	R	S	E	I	
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R	D	E	R	S	O	S	T	S	S	A	S	S	T
E	Y	R	O	T	S	I	H	Y	L	I	M	A	F

SEPTEMBER
DIET
ALL MALES
RISK FACTORS
AGE
PSA TEST
SCREENING
FAMILY HISTORY
RACE

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/1304087/>

A CALM IN THE STORM: COMMUNITY HEALTH ADVISOR BRINGS WORDS OF SERENITY AND MOTIVATION TO THE AIRWAVES



Loretta Herring's soothing words of encouragement are among the last heard by thousands at the end of each night. Her commentary lasts less than two minutes, but delivers enough solace to relieve the worries of the day.

Herring, a community health advisor for Jefferson County, is used to speaking at church gatherings and community events large and small. Still, she never expected to become a welcome presence in cars and homes each night with her "Kiss Motivational Moment."

For Herring, the nightly motivational segment

on 98.7 Kiss FM was an unexpected, yet logical extension of her daily work as both a cancer support and awareness advocate and as a minister. Herring in recent months has been featured on "The Night Kiss," a popular longtime radio show on the Birmingham radio station.

Herring's moments offer listeners a short break from daily stresses that include the current health crisis, social unrest and economic uncertainty.

"Did you know the plan for you to walk into your destiny is in place just waiting for you?" Herring said on the air in a recent segment with music playing behind her. "Sometimes, things happen to derail us or blur out our vision and life just doesn't look like where you are going. But the key to success is locked inside you."

It was during a prayer breakfast where Kim Moore "The Night Bird," Kiss FM's longtime evening radio host, heard Herring and invited her to be a guest on the show.

"That was in July, and I did it every night that month. So when July ended, I thought that would be it," Herring said.

She's still on the air.

"I have been encouraged that I've been able to empower people through these motivational talks," Herring said. "I didn't know it was going to turn out like this."

Herring for decades has done her best to find the most positive elements in what were often her most challenging experiences. Those challenges

include personal tragedies such as the loss of her mother to cancer and then her own breast cancer diagnosis.

Shortly after her mother's death 22 years ago, Herring founded the Cancer Awareness Network. The group assists local cancer survivors with financial, transportation and housekeeping needs.

"I have tried to use everything that has happened in my life to help other people," Herring said. "That's how the nonprofit organization started, from the pain of my mother's demise. Now since my own diagnosis, I've been working with organizations all across the state to help cancer patients improve their lives while dealing with this disease."

Herring later founded another organization, Sorrow to Joy, after the unexpected death of her husband. The support groups continue to meet weekly, now through Zoom.

When it comes to her daily inspiration, Herring writes down whatever word or phrase that gives her an idea, then takes it home for further exploration. For Herring, inspiration is everywhere. For example, a conversation with her grandson about the word "censorship" gave Herring an idea for a Motivational Moment.

"I took that word, and in less 10 minutes I had already written my speech about setting boundaries and 'censoring' things that come into our environment that we don't need to invite in," she said. "I've never done this before and I'm just honored to have this platform."

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Please note: Individuals requesting education and outreach materials for Breast Cancer Awareness Month should contact their local coordinators by Sept. 20 to allow staff to get the items mailed to them in a timely fashion.

O'NEAL COMPREHENSIVE CANCER CENTER

UAB THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

"HEY FELLAS"

PROSTATE CANCER EDUCATION

IT'S TIME WE HAD A TALK...



JOIN 1 OF 2 CONVERSATIONS & INVITE A FRIEND

LET'S TALK ABOUT

- HIGH RATES OF PROSTATE CANCER
- PROSTATE CANCER IN AFRICAN AMERICANS
- AND SO MUCH MORE

REGISTER VIA EVENTBRITE
SEARCH: HEY FELLAS

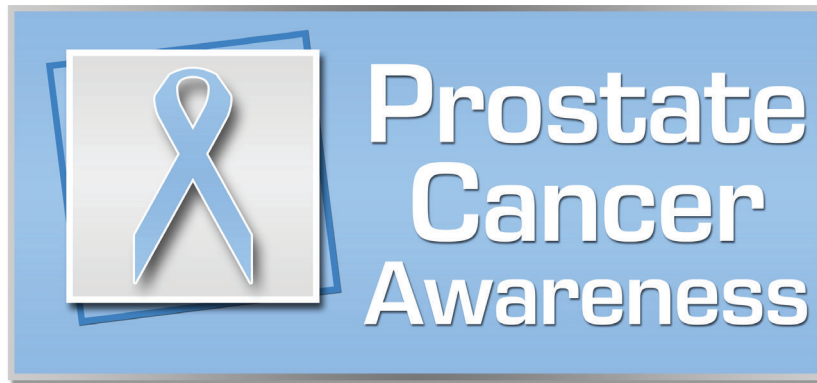
MONDAY
9/14 5:30 PM

SATURDAY
9/26 10:00 AM



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





COMMUNITY PROFILE

MAN TO MAN: COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS WORK TO REMOVE STIGMA IN MEN'S HEALTH AND PROSTATE CANCER AWARENESS

Charles Latham will never forget about the 16 men he has spoken to one-on-one, over the years, about the need to be screened for prostate cancer.

They included friends and even two of his own brothers. Fifteen of the men heeded his advice and were tested, diagnosed and successfully treated from prostate cancer. Still, the one man who waited too long will forever remain at the forefront of Latham's mind.

"He said, 'Tell my story. I should have listened to you,'" Latham said, remembering his late friend during a conversation in his final days. "I always have to talk about the one who asked me to tell his story."

Latham, a member of the Community Advisory Board for the Office of Community Outreach and Engagement (OCOE), is among the many who are dedicated to spreading the message of screening, early detection and survival.

Through its staff, community health advisors and the Community Advisory Board, OCOE continues to reach more men and their families to stress men's health and prostate cancer awareness.

At least 179 of the current 213 community health advisors have a history of prostate cancer or have a relative with history of the disease. Latham, Charles Feagin and Nathaniel Rutledge are Community Advisory Board Members who also serve as hands-on advocates for men's health and prostate cancer awareness.

As members of the OCOE's Prostate Cancer Working Group, the three men also advise regarding a study to develop culturally appropriate messages and tools to increase prostate cancer screening rates among African American men, a population that dies of prostate cancer at a rate 2.5 times higher than that of their white counterparts.

The effort is sponsored by the Mike Slive Foundation for Prostate Cancer Research. Results will be used to increase knowledge and improve attitudes toward prostate cancer screening across the state. Other CAB members part of the working group are the Rev. Curtis Jackson and Trevis Smith.

CHARLES LATHAM'S STORY



Charles Latham

Latham's personal story of survival continues to motivate him as an advocate for prostate cancer awareness.

Latham was 50 years old and preparing to retire and return home

to his native Grenada, Mississippi when he revived a disturbing report from his doctor. It was a positive diagnosis of prostate cancer.

"I decided to have the cancer taken out of my body. I'm convinced that had I not gone in for that examination, I would be dead today," said Latham, now a 16-year survivor. "Anytime that a person is faced with their own mortality, it changes the way you see things. It changes the way you approach life."

JERRY FEAGIN'S STORY

Nearly everyone in his Butler County community knew Jerry Feagin's father. Willie George Feagin was a businessman and church deacon. However, when the elder Feagin died of prostate cancer in 1997, there was little talk about the disease, much less the need for early testing. Grief led his son to find a new calling to educate himself, his family and his community.

"Everybody knew my dad, so when he passed a lot of people were affected by that," Feagin said. "He just didn't have the treatment options that we have today. It was a shocker because a lot of guys weren't aware of prostate cancer." Since then, Feagin said men in his family from Niagara Falls to Texas have created a network of support for each other. It has paid off. At least seven relatives were diagnosed early and successfully treated.

"I became an advocate for it and urging my family members to get tested," Feagin said. "They've all started getting checked and going to the doctors and sharing family history.

All the men became aware of it and urged each other to get checked."

Feagin in 2013 was also diagnosed with prostate cancer. His earlier experience with his father had him prepared.

"It wasn't bad. They removed it, and thank God it was early," he said. "Had we had the technology that we have today, I do believe my father would have survived prostate cancer."



Jerry Feagin

Feagin five years ago formed a partnership with Homewood-based Urology Centers of Alabama to coordinate an annual prostate screening clinic in Butler County. "When we brought screenings down here, you'd be surprised at the number of men we found with prostate cancer," he recalled.

The Butler County screenings have grown to reach an even broader demographic of men. The message is spreading, he said. "Losing my father was one of the most drastic things I've ever dealt

with,” Feagin said. “But by losing dad, it helped a lot of people too.”

CANDOR, HUMOR AND GENUINE CONCERN

Each man brings his own personality and communication style to the conversation when discussing issues of personal men’s health to groups and individuals.

Feagin’s easy-going style allows some men to both confide in him and seek information, he said. As a dental hygienist, Feagin often has time for small talk with patients in between procedures.

“When we sit there talking, I have a little time and I can discuss things with them,” he said. “When they say you have cancer, cancer is not waiting on you to make a decision. I know some horror stories about men who did not make it because they waited too long.”

Both Feagin and Latham mix both humor and frank talk when discussing sensitive issues of embarrassment and intimacy when it comes to prostate screening and treatment.

“If I can help save other men, I talk

to them straight up. I tell it like I see it. “Don’t worry about any limitations afterward. You are still alive.” Latham often talks about his friend - the 16th man - who was too embarrassed and fearful to be treated for his prostate cancer. When he finally agreed to be treated, the cancer had spread and it was too late, Latham said.

Latham does his best to personally relate to any concerns as he urges men to agree to seek screenings or undergo treatment after a diagnosis.

“I tell men and women that this is going to test your relationship. I say to the men, if you have a woman that’s willing to stick by your side throughout this situation, you ought to appreciate that woman,” he said. “That’s how I get some of the men to prepare for what’s ahead. I’m telling you from the perspective of a man who has gone through it.”

CHIEF NATHANIEL RUTLEDGE

Nathaniel Rutledge’s involvement in men’s healthcare began when he led the Bessemer Police Department as its chief. He noticed that too many of his officers were in poor

health and were reluctant to consult doctors.

“I found that far too often men try to take things in stride and operate with the attitude that, ‘no news is good news, and what I don’t know won’t hurt me.’ Obviously that’s one of biggest mistakes we could make,” Rutledge said. “We found out that my officers were more susceptible to having issues with the prostate, and they weren’t going to the doctor.”



Chief Nathaniel Rutledge

So Rutledge had to cleverly devise a plan to get his officers to go to

the doctor more often. He organized physical training programs, then urged officers to seek medical clearance from a doctor to participate. While there, many discovered serious medical conditions.

“It was a long stretch to try to get the guys to look at themselves, but once they did it became a catalyst to getting more things checked, and that’s what we were hoping to get to from the beginning,” Rutledge said. “If you can just get the conversation started, that is the key.”

As a police chief talking to communities, Rutledge urged citizens to be aware of their surroundings and call officials when things appeared suspicious. He called it “JDLR,” for the colloquialism that it “just don’t look right.” Rutledge said the same principles apply for men’s health. “The best thing is for gentlemen to pay attention and not dismiss things that just don’t seem right,” Rutledge said. “That’s when it’s time call the doctors. I give examples of why it is important to be checked and why I am regularly checked. You try to take your message to as many people as possible.”