



EVENTS & ACTIVITIES

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Asheville Buncombe Institute of Parity Achievement

ABIPA promotes economic, social, and healthy parity achievement for African Americans and other underserved populations in Buncombe County through advocacy, education, research, and community partnerships.

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ABIPA Health Highlights

CELEBRATING 17 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

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Liver Cancer Awareness

Even though Liver Cancer Awareness was officially recognized in October, I would like to personally shine a light on the topic in honor of Lynette Yvonne Gilchrist, my best friend.

By JéWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director
Photo: Pro16 Productions

Lynette died unexpectedly on the morning of November 1st from stage 4 Liver Cancer. We had been friends since we were 12 years old—this year we reached 35 years of sisterhood. Her immediate family and friends were informed of her diagnosis over the weekend and she passed that Monday. She was not a drinker or smoker, so this diagnosis was a total surprise to us all. At the age of 47 she lived a life full of love and joy that impacted immeasurable lives.

According to the American Cancer Society, liver cancer strikes 33,000 Americans annually. It is expected that 23,000 Americans will die as a result of liver cancer this year.

The incidence of liver cancer has been steadily rising in the US, secondary to the increased incidence of hepatitis C and non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD). In the case of

hepatitis C, it takes 10 to 30 years to develop liver cancer in about 5% of infected patients. Thus, the cases of liver cancer cases diagnosed today are the ones who were infected with hepatitis back in the 1980s and '90s.

The number of cases of liver cancer will increase due to NAFLD, which occurs mainly in morbidly obese and diabetic patients. As obesity and diabetes are on the rise, doctors expect to see more liver cancer cases due to these risk factors. Other main risk factors include hepatitis B, especially in communities with high numbers of southeast Asian immigrants, and alcohol.

The liver is also the site where other cancers spread (known as liver metastases). Colorectal cancer, breast cancer, bile duct cancers, and pancreatic cancer are some of the cancers that, in their advanced stages, can spread to the liver.



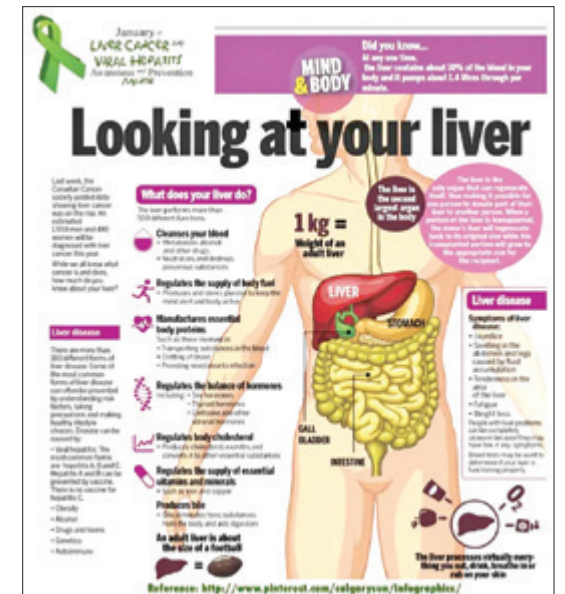
Lynette Yvonne Gilchrist

If caught early, a diagnosis of liver cancer need not be a death sentence. Regular screening in high-risk individuals can detect liver cancer in its earliest stages when treatment can be most effective.

"There have been advances in treatment that have allowed patients better outcomes and an improved quality of life," says Ghassan Abou-Alfa, MD, medical oncologist, and a member of the American Liver Foundation's national medical advisory committee. "During the last decade, survival times in patients with metastatic liver cancer have nearly doubled."

Unfortunately, as in Lynette's case, symptoms of liver cancer often do not appear until the disease is in an advanced stage, which is why regular screening is so important in patients living with liver disease. Regular checkups in those without risk factors are also important, as anyone can develop liver cancer.

Symptoms of liver cancer include loss of appetite, weight loss,



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feeling of fullness, nausea or vomiting, pain in the abdomen or near the right shoulder blade, and yellowing of the skin. There are several treatments for liver cancer, including sorafenib, an oral agent that has shown to improve survival in patients with advanced liver cancer.

For more information about liver cancer, call 1-800-GO-LIVER (1-800-465-4837), or visit liverfoundation.org, or www.mskcc.org/cancer-care/adult/liver.

As we enter the holiday season, make your personal health a priority. There are people you know, and people you don't know, who would not be the same without you.

In honor of Lynette, focus on your liver health. Laugh, dance, and give a lot as you live life to the fullest.

Diabetes Awareness

by Kelly White, MHE, MPH, ABIPA Health Education Program Manager



Kelly White, MHE, MPH. Photo: Pro16 Productions

While we should be aware of preventing diabetes all year, sometimes it can be a challenge to "fix" everything all at once. There are many people who can avoid a diagnosis of diabetes after making minor adjustments to their lifestyle.

The American Diabetes Association provides us with a few great tips on how we can become more conscious while learning to make small lifestyle changes for a better health outcome. Since the Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays are here, one of the first things you can do is plan and write down some of the goals you would like to achieve.

The second thing is that, in some cases, medications may not have to be involved in your specific treatment plan when coupled with exer-

cise and small changes in your diet. These changes can aid in weight loss as well as lower your A1c. Another added bonus is that your blood pressure, and some of the risks of chronic health issues, can decrease.

The last thing is to lean on your support system, the people who can help you achieve your healthy goals and help you stick with them when things get tough. Taking into consideration that we still have to allow for social distance around others, the virtual option gives us the chance to meet up virtually and give each other encouragement to stay on track.

Wishing you a safe and healthy Thanksgiving holiday! Continue to help keep the numbers down by frequently washing your hands, continuing to wear your mask, and social distancing with anyone outside of your home.

Source: American Diabetes Association

Help Us Support 100 Children for Christmas



ABIPA is collecting black and brown books and toys again this year. You can drop off gifts at any of our engagement markets, or at Stefanie's Design Studio.