

ABIPA – ASHEVILLE BUNCOMBE INSTITUTE OF PARITY ACHIEVEMENT



Kelly White, MHE, MPH. Photo: Pro16 Productions

Ovarian Cancer Awareness

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

September is ovarian cancer awareness month.

Ovarian cancer tends to be one of the less-talked-about cancers, and most women, minority women in particular, may not get a diagnosis until later stages due to lack of access to care or not knowing enough about the disease.

One thing about ovarian cancer that most people do not know is that it is very treatable, but it has to be diagnosed in the early stages. Last year the studies estimated that ovarian cancer would affect more than 20,000 women. With stages marked 1 through 5, and symptoms that are easy to miss, it becomes that much more important to get screened early so that a patient can have the best possible outcome.

Anytime someone is feeling anything other than normal they should see their healthcare provider. Some of the more common symptoms could include bloating, abdominal pain, an unusual feeling of fullness, and frequent urination. Since these are symptoms that mimic other conditions, it is best to see your provider for more information and to make the best decision concerning treatment.

During the month of September and beyond, think about ways you can support ovarian cancer survivors and women who are battling not only ovar-

ian cancer but other illnesses as well.

Here are five easy ways you can begin supporting a loved one!

- Make a donation in honor of a survivor or someone who is currently battling ovarian cancer.
- Host a fundraiser to help raise awareness and funding that can assist with research for treatment and trials. This could include participation in a walk/run event or even having loved ones donate to the cause on your birthday instead of buying gifts.
- Volunteer your time during a special event, or within a cancer center.
- Raise awareness by wearing a teal ribbon throughout the month of September. You can talk to friends or community and post on social media how important it is to be aware of the signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer and how important it is to see your provider for regular check-ups.
- Lastly, the most important thing you can do is to schedule your check-up, especially if you notice changes that do not seem normal. Write down any questions you may have before seeing a healthcare provider. Take an advocate with you if there are questions that you are uncomfortable with asking.



Source: Healthline

Ovarian Cancer Survivor Spotlight

Visit our Facebook page for our interview with ABIPA's nurse Yvette Jives.

Yvette Jives, MSW LPN

Armed with a nursing license and a masters degree in social work, HERS, LLC founder Yvette Jives has spent more than three decades working to equalize disparities in the US healthcare system. She has served in various roles developing timely and needed community programs for impoverished, underserved, and under insured women, children, and marginalized people.



Yvette Jives

In 2011, Yvette discovered she had ovarian cancer after advocating for her own diagnosis. During her experience and recovery, Yvette encountered limited information and support which motivated her to address this very personal need.

Coupled with Yvette's 35 years of first-hand experience in the ever changing healthcare system, she began designing programs that would streamline medical services. In 2012, those programs gave birth to HERS, LLC. Yvette now has a team with more than 100 years of combined experience in varying healthcare fields who are serving individuals and providers across western North Carolina.

ABIPA is proud to have Yvette Jives as a team member, and HERS LLC as a partner, as we work together to combat health disparities.

Scrubs & Bowties

Catch Dr. Quinton Cancel and Dr. Jonathan Edwards on WRES 100.7 FM or on Facebook in honor of Prostate Cancer Awareness Month.



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JéWana Grier-McEachin. Photo: Pro16 Productions

Sickle Cell Awareness

By JéWana Grier-McEachin, Executive Director

Sickle cell affects about 100,000 people in the US.

I remember hearing a lot about Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) when I was a child, probably because I had an aunt who lived

with it and died in her mid-50s.

People of African descent make up 90% of the population with sickle cell in the US. It also affects people of Hispanic, South Asian, Southern European, and Middle Eastern ancestry.

Sickle cell likely comes from evolution's attempt to protect against malaria since it affects people

whose ancestors came from parts of the world where malaria is most common. Having the sickle cell trait helps protect a person from the harmful effects of malaria, even though it introduced other health problems in the process.

Sickle cell is a red blood cell disorder that is passed down from your parents the same way people get the color of their eyes, skin, and hair. There is no way to catch sickle cell—it is not contagious.

How Sickled Cells Affect the Body

Healthy red blood cells are smooth, round, and bendable so they can easily flow through blood vessels and carry oxygen to every part of the body.

Sickle cell begins with hemoglobin, the part of the red blood cell that carries oxygen. People with sickle cell have a special type of hemoglobin that does not carry oxygen as well. After sickle hemoglobin releases oxygen, it clumps together forming a stiff rod. This causes the red blood cell to become sickled, or banana-shaped.

Even though we know more about sickle cell, there is so much more that needs to be explored through research.

Funding Disparities

The funding disparities for research on sickle cell compared to other pediatric diseases are huge. Cystic fibrosis, a disease that affects primarily Caucasians, occurs in only a third of the numbers affected by SCD, but receives 3.5 times more NIH funding. Private

funding from foundations was about 400 times higher for cystic fibrosis! Unsurprisingly, Johns Hopkins researchers John Strouse and Carlton Haywood note that

no drugs were approved between 2010 and July 2013 for the treatment of SCD compared with five for cystic fibrosis.

Dr. Strouse does not attribute these differences to racism or social justice issues, but rather to media savvy. He noted, "This reflects landscape of disease advocacy... The classic example is Neglected Tropical Diseases," which are garnering attention because of effective advocacy. He said, "Some disease communities are more effective than others," citing the Cystic Fibrosis, Diamond Black and Fanconi anemia foundations, and ALS as other particularly effective groups.

On a more optimistic note, Strouse concluded that, "right now is a particularly fruitful time for drug development" and that there is more interest from pharmaceutical companies in SCD.

As we learn more about SCD, we encourage everyone to donate blood this month.

Sources: SickleCellSpeaks.com; Forbes.com.



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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.

