

INSTITUTE FOR PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE & ADVOCACY



Kathey Avery, RN, BSN

Avery Health - Education and Consulting

brings extensive experience and knowledge to help individuals and groups achieve positive health outcomes and implement equity.

Kathey Avery, founder and owner of Avery Health - Education and Consulting, has more than 35 years of experience in healthcare and community activism. She is dedicated to raising awareness about, and helping in the prevention of, chronic diseases and preventable cancers through patient and public education and personal accountability.

Contact Kathey Avery today at 828-768-2369 to schedule a talk or workshop. For more details, please visit www.AveryHEC.com

The Institute for Preventive Healthcare & Advocacy



The mission of the **Institute for Preventive Healthcare & Advocacy** is to promote optimum health for all residents of Buncombe County and surrounding areas by addressing the social determinants of health and the inequities in access to affordable and preventive healthcare.

www.ifpha.org

The IFPHA is grateful for the support of our sponsors.



September is Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month

BY KATHEY AVERY RN, BSN, CN

Ovarian cancer is often called the “silent” killer because many times there are no symptoms until the disease has progressed to an advanced stage and becomes difficult to treat.

One-third of American women will get some form of cancer in their lifetime. Approximately 1.5% of those cases will be cancer involving one or both ovaries.

Ovarian cancer symptoms are often mistaken for other causes because they can be subtle and experienced by women who do not have ovarian cancer. Often, they can be confused with symptoms of other less severe illnesses, like gastrointestinal complaints (IBS or irritable bowel syndrome), leading to frequent misdiagnosis.

The World Ovarian Cancer Coalition's Every Woman Study is based on the findings from a survey of over 1,500 women living with ovarian cancer worldwide. The study found that nine in 10 women experienced multiple symptoms prior to diagnosis, irrespective of the stage of diagnosis or type of ovarian cancer. Alarming, their study also found that more than two-thirds of women had not heard of ovarian cancer, or knew anything about it, prior to their diagnosis.

Raising awareness of ovarian cancer and its symptoms with women, and clinicians, is essential if we are to reduce delays in diagnosis. It is especially important as there is no routine, simple screening test to detect ovarian cancer.

Who is at Risk?

Age: Two-thirds of women diagnosed with ovarian cancer are age 55 or older.

Childbearing status: Women who have delivered at least one child, especially before

age 30, are at a lower risk for developing the disease. The more children a woman has, the more her ovarian cancer risk declines. Women who breastfeed further reduce their risk.

Obesity: Women with a body mass index (BMI) of 30 or greater may have a higher risk of developing ovarian cancer.

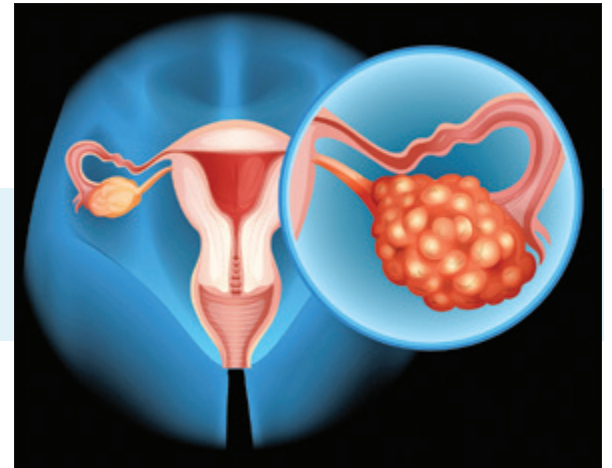
Genetics: If a mother, sister, grandmother, or aunt has had ovarian cancer there's a higher risk of developing it.

Genetic mutations: Some women who have an inherited mutation on one of two genes called breast cancer gene 1 (BRCA1) and breast cancer gene 2 (BRCA2). Women with the BRCA1 mutation, have a 35 to 70 percent higher risk of ovarian cancer. Women with the BRCA2 mutation have a 10 to 30 percent higher risk.

Breast, colorectal, or endometrial cancer: Women who've been diagnosed with one of these cancers have a higher risk of developing ovarian cancer.

Early symptoms may include:

- An unusual feeling of fullness or discomfort in the pelvic region
- Unexplainable indigestion, gas, or bloating that is not relieved with over-the-counter antacids
- Pain during sexual intercourse



Nine in 10 women have experienced multiple symptoms prior to diagnosis.

- Abnormal bleeding
- Swelling and pain of the abdomen
- Changes in bowel habits
- Extreme fatigue
- Unexplained weight loss
- Abnormal bleeding. Any post-menopausal bleeding should always be checked by your primary health care provider or doctor.

The treatment for ovarian cancer varies according to a number of factors. For most women, the first treatment is also a diagnostic procedure which involves surgery to determine the extent to which the disease has spread. As a result of surgery, the cancer will be staged.

Stages range from I to IV, with I being the earliest and IV being the most advanced stage. Treatment of ovarian cancer is based on the stage and grade of the disease.

Source: World Ovarian Cancer Coalition

IFPHA Advocates for Housing and a Living Wage

IFPHA is dedicated to advocacy work. This is the meaning of the A in our acronym. Housing and making a living wage is something our organization advocates for whenever we can.

The Federal living wage continues to be \$7.25 an hour. The \$7.25 federal minimum wage turned 15 years old in July of this year according to Caleigh Wells from Marketplace broadcast. That is the longest the minimum wage has gone without being raised. The federal minimum wage has been increased by Congress 22 times, most recently in 2009 from \$6.55 to \$7.25 an hour.

The good news, according to Tia Koonse, legal and policy research manager at the



Can you afford housing if you make \$7.25 an hour?

UCLA Labor Center, is that more states and cities have established their own minimum wages. The number of workers who earn the federal minimum in those states and cities is going down. It's now only about 1.3% of hourly employees.

What Can You Afford?

Think about what you can afford in Asheville at these monthly wages:

- With no dependents, \$7.25/40 hrs. = \$290 gross income. \$267.81 net gives you \$1,071.24 a month.
- With no dependents, \$16/40 hrs. = \$640 gross income. \$591.04 net gives you \$2,364.16 a month.

A one-bedroom apartment in this area on average is, according to apartment.com, \$1,534. A studio apartment is \$1,274. In the US a one bedroom apartment is, on average, \$1,739.

Ever heard of the 30% rule? It is the idea that you should budget a minimum of 30% of your gross monthly income for housing (before taxes).

Read more next month as we continue our advocacy series.

Support IFPHA

On **Saturday, October 12** IFPHA will host their **Traveling Thrift Shop**. Every purchase of any of the donated items goes to support our work in the community. The Traveling Thrift Shop opens at 9 a.m. at Brown Temple CME Church, 32 Phifer Street in Asheville.