

INSTITUTE FOR PREVENTIVE HEALTHCARE & ADVOCACY



Kathey Avery, RN, BSN, CN

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

Promoting 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

IFPHA is grateful for the support of our sponsors and partners.

IFPHA PARTNERS:
Bounty and Soul
Rock Hill Baptist Church
Shiloh Association

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month

BY KATHEY AVERY RN, BSN, CN

Prevention, education, and the importance of screenings.

Breast cancer is a disease in which malignant (cancer) cells form in the breast tissue.

Statistics You Should Know in 2026

- Breast cancer is the most commonly diagnosed cancer in women worldwide and the leading cause of cancer-related death among women. Recent data paints a picture that is sobering but also hopeful. Survival is improving in high-income countries, yet the global burden is still rising fast.
- 2.3 million women were diagnosed with breast cancer globally in 2022; 670,000 women died from it that same year.
 - 1 in 20 women worldwide will be diagnosed with breast cancer in their lifetime.
 - By 2050, annual cases are projected to rise by 38% (to 3.2 million) and deaths by 68% (to 1.1 million) if current trends continue.
 - In the US, roughly 1 in 8 women (about 13%) will develop invasive breast cancer at some point in her life.
 - Cases in younger women are climbing. Incidence in women under 50 has risen about 1.4% per year over the last decade.
 - Survival gaps are stark. In high-income countries, 83% of women diagnosed survive, while in low-income countries, more than half of those diagnosed die from it.
 - Men get breast cancer too. It accounts for less than 1% of all breast cancers, but the risk and stigma are real.
 - In the US, Black women have a 5% lower incidence than white women, but a 38% higher risk of dying from the disease, largely because of access-to-care gaps.

Some Types of Breast Cancer

- DCIS (Ductal Carcinoma in Situ): Non-invasive cancer in the breast milk ducts.

- Invasive Ductal Carcinoma (IDC): The most common type, making up 80% of cases.
- Invasive Lobular Carcinoma (ILC): Slow-growing, about 10–15% of cases.
- Triple-Negative Breast Cancer (TNBC): Aggressive and difficult to treat, also more common among Black women.
- Inflammatory Breast Cancer (IBC): Rare and aggressive, about 1–5% of cases.
- Metastatic Breast Cancer (MBC): Stage 4 cancer that has spread to other parts of the body.

Breast Cancer by Age

- Breast cancer primarily affects middle-aged and older women, but it can occur at any age.
- The average age of diagnosis is 62, but half of cases are diagnosed at or before this age.
 - About 9% of cases occur in women under 45.
 - Younger women’s risk has increased, particularly under 35.

Breast Cancer and Race/Ethnicity

- Black Women:
- Diagnosed at a slightly younger average age (60) than white women at average age 62.
 - 40% more likely to die from breast cancer than white women.
 - Lowest five-year survival rate among all racial and ethnic groups.
 - 1 in 5 are diagnosed with TNBC, which is harder to treat.



IFPHA, and retired Dr. Mike Messino with Novant, provided mammograms during an event to raise awareness in 2025.

- Hispanic Women:
- 20% lower incidence overall; more often diagnosed at later stages.
 - Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in this group.
- Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian, and Alaska Native Women:
- Asian and Pacific Islander women are more often diagnosed at an earlier, more treatable stage.
 - Lowest death rates overall, with Chinese and Japanese women showing the highest survival rates.
 - American Indian and Alaska Native women have the lowest incidence of breast cancer, though disparities remain in access to care.

Progress and Hope

Women who receive regular screenings have a 26% lower risk of dying from breast cancer than those who do not. This underscores the life-saving importance of mammograms.

Breast Density and Screening

One factor that complicates detection is breast density. Black women, on average, have denser breast tissue than white women, which makes mammograms harder to read and increases risk. The only way to know if you have dense breasts is through a mammogram, which must be interpreted by a trained radiologist.

Sources: Goodera.com; National Breast Cancer Foundation; Journal of the National Cancer Institute

Awareness Matters

At IFPHA, we believe that “Real Help in Real Time” is about meeting people where they are and ensuring that preventive healthcare is accessible to everyone. The disparities in breast cancer outcomes, especially for Black and Hispanic women, are stark reminders that education, screenings, and advocacy must remain at the forefront of community health.

IFPHA’s team will work together to bring our breast cancer screening to UNC-A in honor of Coach Kay Yow who lived with breast cancer for more than 22 years. Her experience and spirit of survival helped others and inspired the movement that continues today. Watch for more information later this year.

As we observe Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we honor Kay Yow and every person (women and men). Remember that breast cancer impacts mothers, sisters, daughters, fathers, brothers, and entire families.



The 2024 Kay Yow event at UNCA.

Prevention, education, and access to care save lives.

We encourage women and men to talk with their healthcare providers, know their risks, and prioritize regular screenings.

IFPHA works to close the gap in health disparities and move toward a future where survival is not determined by race, income, or zip code.

Lunch & Learn

Join Kathey Avery on the third and fourth Wednesdays of the month from 12-1 p.m. at the Linwood Crump Shiloh Community Center, 121 Shiloh Road in Asheville. The community nurse will address “Hot Topics” and provide education and knowledge to help keep you healthy. All are welcome!