



NEWS RELEASE

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Community Advisory Committee Established for Breast Cancer and Environment Research Program

CHAPEL HILL - A new Community Advisory Committee to support research on breast cancer and the environment met for the first time on October 7 in Chapel Hill. The Committee includes breast cancer survivors and advocates, medical and health care providers, and public health workers representing local and state agencies with an interest in breast cancer prevention.

The 10-member Committee was created to strengthen communication between community stakeholders and breast cancer researchers in the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health and UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Board members are: Keith Amos, MD, assistant professor of surgery, UNC Breast Center, Chapel Hill; Delores "Dee" Burnett, breast cancer survivor and advocate for the Save Our Sisters program, Raleigh; Curtis Jackson, MHA, retired community health educator, Chapel Hill; Akiia Robertson James, web producer and health and fitness blogger, WTVD, Apex; Lakeisha Johnson, MA, assistant branch head, cancer prevention and control branch, NC Division of Public Health, Raleigh; Phyllis Smith, RD, LDN, extension agent, family and consumer science, Chatham County Center, NC Cooperative Extension, Pittsboro; Georgia Smith-Marsalis, chair, mental and physical health awareness committee for Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Raleigh; Lidia Tiller, coordinator for the Educate Our Women Program, Wake County Human Services, Raleigh; Sharon Ware, EdD, associate professor of nursing and child care health consultant, North Carolina Central University, Durham; and Grace Wright, health education coordinator, NC Office of Disability and Health and advocate for the Save Our Sisters program, Chapel Hill.

The group will help UNC scientists understand the information needs of the community and will work to develop effective strategies for communicating science-based information to the community and to health care professionals. The Committee will also advise researchers on a community-based participatory research project designed to gauge the perceptions of community members and health care professionals in relation to breast cancer and breast cancer disparities. Neasha Graves, MPA, of the UNC Center for Environmental Health and Susceptibility coordinates the activities of the Committee.

Grant principal investigator Melissa Troester, PhD, explained, "This committee will help UNC scientists understand the concerns of North Carolinians about breast cancer prevention, so that we can tailor our research to meet their information needs. We'll also learn from this group how to develop appropriate messages about breast cancer research for audiences for whom this emerging research is most relevant." Troester is assistant professor of epidemiology in the UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health.

UNC scientists Troester, and Liza Makowski, PhD, co-principal investigator and assistant professor of nutrition, have received a five-year \$2.2 million grant to study how factors such as pregnancy and obesity may promote susceptibility to an aggressive subtype of breast cancer that is more prevalent in young, African American patients. The grant is funded by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Breast Cancer and Environment Research Program.

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