

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chicago Leading the Way: New Educational Collaboration Seeks to Create a Clinical Action Plan to Eradicate Racial Disparity Gap in Breast Cancer

Improving clinical practice and health outcomes for all patients through education

Chicago, ILLINOIS, May 12, 2021— The National Cancer Institute estimates that in 2021, [281,550 women](#) will be newly diagnosed with breast cancer and more than 42,000 will die from the disease. But while the overall incidence and mortality rates of breast cancer have declined in recent years, these benefits have been disproportionately realized, with African American women dying at a rate nearly [40% higher](#) than non-Hispanic white women. In Chicago, this disparity gap is not an abstraction. According to [Susan G. Komen Chicago](#), Black women in Chicago are also more likely to be diagnosed at a younger age; are 40%-70% more likely to have a late-stage diagnosis; and are more likely to be diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer, an aggressive subtype that has fewer treatment options.

While the breast cancer mortality rate of Black women in Chicago is unacceptably high, this rate is much improved over the last 15 years thanks to [community action](#), local policy initiatives, and successful health alliances. Using the success of these programs as a roadmap, the Academy for Continued Healthcare Learning (ACHL) is collaborating with the University of Chicago Medicine Comprehensive Cancer Center and Center for Continuing Medical Education, along with the [University of Illinois Chicago Cancer Center](#) and their Chicago Cancer Screening and Testing Access Coalition (CCSTAC), to explore how enhanced clinical training and continuing education within health systems can effectively translate the research about what fuels disparities into actionable change that can be replicated internationally.

“The University of Chicago is at the forefront of medicine, and we are going to be at the forefront of innovative solutions that promote health equity through solidarity,” said Olufunmilayo Olopade MD, FACP, Director, Center for Clinical Cancer Genetics & Global Health at the University of Chicago.

Through continuing medical education (CME) grant funding from pharmaceutical manufacturers Daiichi Sankyo and AstraZeneca, the quality improvement program will follow the [Institute for Healthcare Improvement’s \(IHI\) Plan-Do-Study-Act \(PDSA\) process](#) to study the effectiveness of targeted interventions meant to improve various facets of breast cancer care for African American women treated in Cook County. Outcomes from this study will be analyzed to decipher the complex and interrelated patient, provider, and health system factors that are contributing to disparities in breast cancer care. This information will be used to create a clinical action plan scalable to large academic and community hospitals for our colleagues around the world. ACHL has launched a website (www.fightingbcdisparities.com) to chronicle the program’s progress and share best practices along the way.

“We are especially thankful to Daiichi Sankyo and AstraZeneca for their generous grant and for recognizing CME as a powerful tool for positive change – helping dedicated clinicians identify



Contact: Emily Bennett
Phone: 773.714.0705 ext. 153
Email: ebennett@achlcme.org

better ways to improve breast cancer care for *all patients everywhere*,” said Mahira Z. Bonomo, Director, The Center for Continuing Medical Education at the University of Chicago.

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The Academy for Continued Healthcare Learning

ACHL actively engages and collaborates with diverse healthcare stakeholders to transform the reach and redefine the value of independent medical education. Through these collaborations and as an independent CME/CE provider, ACHL strives to promote positive change and improve the quality of care for patients everywhere. Based in Chicago, IL, ACHL’s team of 25 employees manages more than 250 educational activities each year across a wide range of therapeutic areas – winning awards for our groundbreaking digital technologies, innovative designs, and global reach.

The University of Chicago Medicine and Biological Sciences Division & Pritzker School of Medicine (UChicago)

One of the world's premier academic and research institutions, the University of Chicago has driven new ways of thinking since its 1890 founding. Today, UChicago is an intellectual destination that draws inspired scholars to our Hyde Park and international campuses, keeping UChicago at the nexus of ideas that challenge and change the world.

The University of Chicago Medicine Comprehensive Cancer Center

The mission of the University of Chicago Medicine Comprehensive Cancer Center is to develop innovative and collaborative research to discover the determinants of cancer, to develop cures for cancer, and to prevent cancer.

Cancer Disparities

Scientists have long understood that a person’s ethnicity is inherently linked to their health. Research has shown that some racial and ethnic sub-groups are more prone to certain diseases, such as cancer and cardiovascular disease. In Chicago, these rates of disparity are higher than in other major cities. Community outreach and engagement are essential to addressing these disparities. The best way to fight cancer is to prevent it from developing. A leader in prevention, the Comprehensive Cancer Center has pioneered model clinics to benefit people at high risk of primary or recurrent cancer. Our specialists are developing new prevention strategies based on leading-edge research and are applying these strategies to high-risk individuals.

The Center for Continuing Medical Education

The mission of the Center for Continuing Medical Education at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine is to improve patient care by fostering lifelong learning for all members of both the interdisciplinary and interprofessional health care teams.

The University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine has been long recognized for its exemplary performance in the area of physician education. During the November 2017 re-accreditation review by the ACCME, the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine was awarded Accreditation with Commendation status through November 2023. Additionally, the University became an approved ABMS Portfolio Sponsor for QI/PI projects in September 2016.

It is the policy of the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine to ensure balance,



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Phone: 773.714.0705 ext. 153
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independence, objectivity, and scientific rigor in all its individually provided or jointly provided educational activities.

Chicago Cancer Screening and Testing Access Coalition (CCSTAC)

CCSTAC is a cohort of Chicago-area medical leaders who support the transformation of healthcare systems. CCSTAC's focus is to implement genetic counseling and testing in the primary care setting to increase early detection of breast cancer.

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