

Georgia Cancer Center researcher launches health disparity study on breast cancer in Georgia's Black community

CONTACT: Danielle Harris, 706-522-3023, deharris1@augusta.edu

AUGUSTA, Ga. (March 24, 2021) – Breast cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in Black women living in Georgia, and on the national front, Black women are twice as likely to be diagnosed with advanced stages of breast cancer compared to white women, researchers say.

“These alarming statistics are examples of the health disparities that must be addressed in women’s health and cancer research,” said Dr. Samantha Sojourner, a postdoctoral fellow in the Georgia Cancer Center’s Cancer [Prevention, Control & Population Health Program](#).

According to Sojourner, there are several contributing factors behind this health care crisis, including diet, lack of access to adequate health care and underlying medical conditions such as diabetes and heart disease. However, research indicates genetics may also play a role in the rate of Black women being diagnosed with triple-negative breast cancer, a rare but aggressive form that does not respond to current hormonal therapies.

Sojourner, a native of Augusta, is working to shed light on and eliminate the state’s breast cancer disparities with the launch of her project “Living My BREAST Life” in underserved communities, starting with the Central Savannah River Area.

The project – funded through a Cancer Prevention, Control & Population Health Program Pilot Award at the Georgia Cancer Center – is aimed to improve breast cancer outcomes by raising awareness, providing access to genetic testing and high-quality screening and changing participants’ attitudes toward breast cancer treatment, early detection and clinical trials.

Sojourner will launch her study in April and hopes to have her initial results by Fall 2021.

“Breast cancer mortality rates in Black women residing in Georgia exceed the national average, and this project will help give us a better understanding on the best way to approach this medical crisis,” said Sojourner. “I cannot express how important it is for Black women to know their risk of breast cancer, so they can be proactive about their health and get the medical attention they need.”

Learn more about the [racial disparities in health care](#) and how the Georgia Cancer Center is tackling [clinical trial hesitancy](#) in the Black community.

DOWNLOAD: [An image](#) of Dr. Samantha Sojourner

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The Georgia Cancer Center at Augusta University is dedicated to reducing the burden of cancer in Georgia and across the globe through superior care, innovation, and education. Through unprecedented expansion, the Georgia Cancer Center is providing access to more first-in-the-nation clinical trials, world-renowned experts and lifesaving options.