

THE GEORGIA CANCER COALITION

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INTRODUCTION

Nancy Paris used cancer in Georgia to illustrate how state governments can coordinate disease-related activities, leverage state dollars, create innovative programs, and serve as catalysts for changing how diseases burden a population.

Cancer's impact in Georgia is staggering: the state has one of the highest cancer rates in the nation. During the past year, a total of 31,600 new cases were diagnosed and 13,700 Georgians died of cancer. Georgia's mortality rate from prostate cancer (41.6 per 100,000) exceeds the national rate (33.9 per 100,000).

African Americans living in Georgia are 27% more likely than Whites to die of cancer. African-American men are twice as likely as White men to die of prostate cancer. Georgia's African-American men have one of the highest death rates for prostate cancer in the nation.

GEORGIA CANCER COALITION

The nonprofit Georgia Cancer Coalition (GCC) was created "to make Georgia a national leader in cancer prevention, treatment, and research." It is a statewide network of people and organizations—doctors, hospitals, government agencies, public health services, survivor and community health groups, universities, industries, nonprofits, and interested individuals.

The GCC is a public-private partnership funded by the state legislature with Tobacco Settlement Funds. It also receives funding from a state income tax check-off for cancer research. Funding for programs comes from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute; pharmaceutical companies; foundations and corporations; individual donations; and federal matching funds.

State partners are public health, community health, the University System of Georgia, the Georgia Research Alliance, and the Georgia Technology Authority.

Private partners include the American Cancer Society, private colleges and universities, physicians and hospitals, foundations, cancer survivor groups, civic and community organizations, the pharmaceutical industry, and health-related organizations.

GCC's 5 MAJOR PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMS

Regional Programs of Excellence

Eight planning grants have been awarded to coalitions representing 134 of Georgia's 159 counties. The coalitions include doctors, hospitals, public health facilities, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and business leaders. They are designed to improve access to cancer care and to develop a continuum of care that includes research and education.

Georgia Cancer Center for Excellence

The center is a partnership with Emory University School of Medicine, Morehouse School of Medicine, and the Winship Cancer Institute. The center will focus on treatment, research, and education. It also will address cancer-related disparities. The 9th and 10th floors of Grady Memorial Hospital in Atlanta have been outfitted with equipment unavailable elsewhere in the state.

Distinguished Cancer Clinicians and Scientists

Forty university scholars have been approved to participate in this program. They receive up to \$150,000 each per year and are obligated to share their research results with GCC and other scholars. Priority was given to scholars with "breakthrough" potential, external funding support, and research consistent with National Cancer Institute emphases.

Insurers' Agreement

This national model includes 8 major insurers to cover routine costs of clinical trials. The agreement covers the trials of any accredited medical, nursing, or pharmacy school in Georgia. It also covers cancer screening exams recommended by the American Cancer Society.

Georgia Clinical Trials and Education Network

This network is a nonprofit scientific and educational foundation with an independent board of academic and community cancer care physicians. The GCC funded part of its development and plans to integrate the network into the Regional Programs of Excellence. The network's missions are to improve access and entry into trials; increase the number of trials, accrual and representation of the under-served; serve as a unique research resource; and develop a cadre of trial personnel. This

PARTNERSHIPS THAT WORK - Paris

complex partnership involves GCC, community cancer care providers, Community Clinical Oncology Programs, academic institutions, and other cancer-related organizations.

“Partnerships with the Georgia Cancer Coalition provide opportunities for hospitals and health systems, business and insurers, physicians and academia,” Paris said.

Hospitals and health systems can build programs and centers of excellence; create community coalitions; and expand and enhance prevention, treatment, research, and education programs. Business and insurers cover screenings recommended by the American Cancer Society, cover patients in clinical trials,

and conduct prevention and screening campaigns. Physicians are able to improve outcomes through participation in clinical trials and access to new treatments; expand access and capacity and improve the quality of care; participate in a statewide cancer care network; and build a patient base. Academia can expand research capacity and program development; initiate new clinical trials and increase accrual; recruit new scholars; and build and leverage community ties.

“GCC’s opportunity will be to work with partners to build a system of cancer care—with science as its foundation—that will reduce the number of cancer deaths in Georgia,” Paris said.