



CANCER PREVENTION INSTITUTE
OF CALIFORNIA

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**Dr. Denise Johnson Miller to Speak during Annual
“EACH ONE REACH ONE,” AFRICAN AMERICAN BREAST CANCER CONFERENCE
Registration Closes April 28, 2010**

OAKLAND (April 2010) – The Conference Planning Committee recently selected Dr. Denise Johnson Miller as the official Medical Advisor for their annual breast cancer conference which is the largest cancer education event focused on breast cancer awareness and survivorship targeting African Americans in the state. Dr. Miller who recently relocated from the Bay Area is a breast surgeon and the Director of the St. Francis Breast Surgery Program at the St. Francis Medical Group in Indiana. She will be conducting the keynote address which will highlight the latest clinical updates in breast cancer, including triple negative breast cancer, treatment options, breast reconstruction, and living with advanced metastatic breast cancer.

The theme of the **6th Annual Conference** sponsored by the Fremont-based Cancer Prevention Institute of California (CPIC) and co-sponsored by the Women’s Cancer Resource Center (WCRC) of Oakland is **“Each One Reach One: Working Together to Make A Change”**. The event will be held on **Saturday, May 1, 2010, 7:30am – 4:30pm, in the Conference Center at The Cathedral of Christ the Light, 2121 Harrison Street in downtown Oakland, across from Lake Merritt**. This NEW location provides convenience and comfort amid a complimentary environment, germane to conference participants.

Talking to women in communities of color about breast cancer isn’t easy. There has to be a sense of respect and appreciation shown to the individual, their culture, and their concerns in order to gain one’s trust and begin this important dialogue. As the only conference specifically focused on addressing the unique cultural needs of African American women, the **Cancer Prevention Institute of California’s (formerly the Northern California Cancer Center) African American Breast Cancer Conference**, has developed a growing popularity in many SF Bay Area communities as the premier source for information about breast cancer. This day-long community conference is one of sharing, educating, and celebrating life all while raising awareness about breast cancer in African American communities and empowering women to make informed decisions about their health.

“As we embark upon another year of conducting this program, we do so with the understanding that providing this educational opportunity for the most vulnerable members of our communities is what is required of us,” said **Pamela Ratliff, Planning Committee Chair and Program Manager of Community Education at CPIC**. She adds, “With health care costs soaring and services being cut both at

the national and state levels, people in underserved and at-risk communities are increasingly seeking more resources to better assist them in understanding what their options are, in addition to being able to better advocate for themselves and their loved ones. Our hope is that one day there will not be a need for this program, but presently, it continues to be an important resource in helping people who may not have access to quality health care services and information. Each One Reach One... serves as the standard for community education programs that are both comprehensive and culturally-relevant.”

Dolores Moorehead, Co-Chair of the Planning Committee and WCRC Client Services Manager stated, “It is exciting to be a part of this annual conference. Each year the attendance has increased which demonstrates this is a much-needed event for the community. The conference provides an opportunity for women and their loved ones to be informed, celebrate life, and sisterhood.”

Registration fee is \$20 per person and includes general seating, breakfast and lunch, conference materials/tote bag, musical entertainment, access to health resources, networking opportunities, and raffle prizes. **Early registration is encouraged; seating is limited.** Scholarships are available to support attendance by African American women from lower-income communities. The registration deadline is April 28, 2010. Contact CPIC by email at education@cpic.org, phone 1.888.315.5988, or register online at www.cpic.org/EORO .

A new addition to this year’s event is the provision of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) for health professionals (RN, MFT/LCSW, CHES) for an additional fee of \$15. Attendance by health professionals who provide cancer-related services to this population is encouraged.

Conference topics include: **breast cancer risk factors, prevention, early detection, treatment options, nutrition, physical activity, triple negative breast cancer, advanced metastatic breast cancer, survivorship, psychosocial support, health advocacy, and family history, with a special focus on mind, body, and spiritual healing.** The intended audience is cancer patients/survivors, family members, caregivers, friends, community advocates, health care professionals/providers, and the general public.

Underground garage parking available at the conference facility for a flat rate of \$5 per day. The Conference Center is conveniently located approximately six (6) blocks from the 19th Street BART station in Oakland. Limited shuttle service to and from the 19th Street BART station provided by advance request.

Partners of this event include Alameda County Medical Center’s Cancer Navigator Program and the American Cancer Society.

Funding for this conference provided by the Cancer Prevention Institute of California: Allison Taylor Holbrooks Breast Cancer Research Fund, Melanie M. Bronfman Education Fund, Oakland Athletics Fund, PlumpJack LINK Fund; Amoena USA Corporation; the Department of Health and Human Services Office on Women’s Health, Region IX; and the Stanford Cancer Center, Cancer Education and Community Partnership.

Organizers are available for interviews; call Sandra Varner, Varner PR 510.569.8855.

A Survivor’s Story

My name is Jackie Pugh and I am a twenty-year breast cancer survivor. I started this battle 20 years ago when I found a lump at age 27. I was lying in the bed, noticed a lump in my breast so, immediately, I went to the doctor and the doctor said at that time, ‘it’s probably nothing, you’re young, come back in a couple of months.’

Being trusting of my doctor, I did just that. A couple of months later, I came back to the doctor and I said, ‘this lump is still here. Would you check it out?’ He said, ‘Well, we still don’t think it’s anything, come back in several more months.’

Now, during this time, I changed medical coverage and went to a new doctor for a routine check I then said, ‘by the way, I have this lump in my breast, my previous doctor said it was nothing, but I wanted to let you know.’ The new doctor said, ‘well, did they do a mammogram?’ And I said, ‘no.’ He then said, ‘well let’s do a mammogram.’

Immediately I got a mammogram and they did see something. He sent me to a surgeon and said, ‘we want to do a biopsy because we’re not sure.’ All the while thinking that [my former] doctor said it was nothing, I never thought it was anything. I had a biopsy. Coming back for another visit, the surgeon said, ‘how old did you say you were?’ It wasn’t until that point I asked, ‘I have cancer?’ The surgeon said, ‘yes you do.’ Just being a young mother --my daughter was seven years old at the time-- things started rushing in my head, thinking to myself, ‘what about my daughter? I’m not going to let nobody raise my daughter, I have to fight this.’ Going through all of these thoughts, the doctor told me about several procedures: I could have chemo (therapy) treatments or if you have a lumpectomy, you can have a mastectomy and total removal of your breast. I had to make a decision right away because --at that time-- breast cancer was not as prevalent as it is now. I opted to have a mastectomy. The following week I had a mastectomy and remember people being very supportive. Shortly after that, I had breast reconstruction: I got a TRAM flap that was described as a tummy tuck and a breast enhancement at the same time, which I can say as a young woman, I’m pretty proud of. That was twenty years ago and I haven’t had any scares or anything since then.

Q: Tell us more about your twenty-year survival benchmark. That is quite an accomplishment and as an advocate, you have seen many changes in breast cancer research and treatment over the years, given your involvement. What are some of the changes that you have seen?

Jackie Pugh (JP): Yes, that’s correct and I have seen many changes. Previously, medical staffs were quick to recommend a mastectomy; now, most doctors try to preserve the breast and suggest a lumpectomy. Now, there is more support for breast cancer. Everywhere you go there is talk about breast cancer and some type of awareness about it. It really wasn’t that way when I was diagnosed. Today, there is more modern technology; more people trying to be informed about and; what I really think is important is that we’re trying to make more people know that there is life after breast cancer.

Q: What do you want people to know who are: facing breast cancer, survivors such as yourself, loved ones of people dealing with breast cancer, and children of breast cancer survivors? What would you say to them?

JP: For children I would say, ‘love on your parent.’ Be very supportive and just trust in your parent at the time; loving them is important. For a survivor, we all have to stick together and encourage one another that’s going through the same disease because it can be scary and you want to have the support of other people. I believe that that kind of support was very important to my survival. People really supported me.

Q: And for people who are family members, friends, husbands, boyfriends...what should they know?

JP: For people that are family members, boyfriends, husbands...know that your support is very important; support is the key. You want to ‘love on’ the people with breast cancer; you want to support them in every way that you can and let them know that you are there for them because that makes a difference for them.

Q: At one time, and not so long ago, breast cancer, as are many cancers, was a stigma for people. They were ashamed or embarrassed to talk about it. I hope we've gotten past that, have we?

JP: I would like to say that we have gotten past the stigma of having breast cancer, but I can't really say that we have. I think there are people who are scared and I mean justifiably so, but there's so much survival in breast cancer if you detect it early. That is the message we really want to get across-- early detection and prevention are the keys to a long and healthy life.

Q: You and the organization you represent (American Cancer Society) are one of the partners of this annual breast cancer conference for African American women, what can they expect?

JP: At the conference, you can really expect a good time. I get excited about the conference because I look forward to seeing women who came last year, coming up to me and saying what a good time they had and how they're looking forward to what they're going to receive on that day. And, we have a lot of vendors with a lot of information about different resources that are available to our women and that's important. But, to see the friendships that have formed from years of coming and attending and just the fun, you know it's a conference that's informational and it's also a good time.

Q: Finally, what are your closing comments about this breast cancer conference?

JP: In closing, I would say this, and not to toot our own horn, but this is one of the best African American breast cancer conferences there is. People are excited and --as a committee-- we get really excited about who comes and share information with our people. That is very important to us and we try to make it very important for our participants.

About the Cancer Prevention Institute of California

The Cancer Prevention Institute of California (CPIC) is the nation's premier organization dedicated to preventing cancer and to reducing its burden where it cannot *yet* be prevented. CPIC tracks patterns of cancer throughout the entire population and identifies those at risk for developing cancer. Its research scientists are leaders in investigating the causes of cancer in large populations to advance the development of prevention-focused interventions. Also producing outreach and education programs, CPIC manages a statewide call center that refers low income women to free cancer screenings and provides education seminars related to cancer. CPIC's innovative cancer prevention research and outreach programs, in formal partnership with the Stanford Cancer Center, deliver a comprehensive arsenal for defeating cancer. For more information, visit www.cpic.org.

About the Women's Cancer Resource Center

Founded in 1986, the Women's Cancer Resource Center is a nonprofit community organization that provides information, resources, services, support, and advocacy for all women with cancer. WCRC makes an extra effort to serve women of color and women from low-income communities – as well as lesbian, bisexual, transgender and older women – because they are traditionally underserved and lack access to quality health care. WCRC supports a woman's right to make her own informed health care decisions.