



# STL Connection

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## PECaD Builds and Expands on Progress with New Funding

The Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center's Program for the Elimination of Cancer Disparities (PECaD) received funding from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) to continue to build and expand program efforts to eliminate local and regional disparities in cancer education, prevention, and treatment. The new five-year grant, awarded in September 2010 from the NCI Center to Reduce Cancer Health Disparities is part of NCI's Community Networks Program (CNP) Centers initiative. Under the direction of PECaD Principal Investigator, Graham Colditz, MD, DrPH, the Siteman Cancer Center is one of only 23 institutions nationwide to receive this distinguished award in 2010 for its commitment to eliminating cancer health disparities. Dr. Colditz is Niess-Gain Professor at Washington University School of Medicine, Director of Prevention and Control at Siteman Cancer Center, and Deputy Director of the Institute for Public Health at Washington University in St. Louis. Dr. Colditz's role at the University assures cross-pollination with diverse disciplines and community partners to achieve the program's goal to work through community partnerships to develop outreach and education, quality improvement and research and training strategies that will foster healthy communities and environments less burdened by cancer disparities.

Since its formal launch in 2003, PECaD has been one of the Siteman Cancer Center's highest priorities. Since 2005,



PECaD has held esteemed funding from NCI to address excessive and disproportionate cancer burden among underserved populations in the local region, to increase and support cancer disparities-related research, and to enhance training of junior investigators in career paths that address and advance the elimination of cancer health disparities. These efforts have and will continue to use community-based partnerships and community-based participatory research approaches that are central to the program goal.

New ventures of PECaD will build upon and expand its prior work. The program will continue its focus on outreach and education, quality improvement and research, and training strategies to advance the elimination of local and regional disparities in cancer. As a requirement of funding, new initiatives include a local/regional randomized, controlled trial focused on colorectal cancer screening, led by Dr. Aimee James, Assistant Professor at Washington University School of Medicine. This work was developed and will be conducted in collaboration with community partners. PECaD's Colorectal Cancer Community Partnership has championed this work. Another new venture includes pilot project funding opportunities for cancer disparities research. Dr. Bettina Brake, Assistant Professor at Washington University School of Medicine, will lead the first pilot study. It will focus on improving minority participation in prostate cancer tissue collection for research purposes. This project assesses a need identified by community partners including PECaD's Prostate

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**SITEMAN CANCER CENTER**  
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*A National Cancer Institute Comprehensive Cancer Center*



# Update on PECaD Collaboration with Community Health Center



*People's Health Centers North County Facility.*

Betty Jean Kerr People's Health Centers has provided comprehensive primary health care for over 38 years throughout the St. Louis area. This has included breast cancer screening services at their Delmar facility. However, administration and staff recognize that women near the North County facility would benefit from convenient access to mammography services where they live and that this might encourage women not up-to-date with screening to be screened. People's transferred available mammography equipment and instituted a mammography screening program at its North County site to address this need.

People's and the Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center have had a longtime relationship including that with the Program for the Elimination of Cancer Disparities (PECaD). In the summer of 2009, PECaD and People's worked together to seek grant funding from the National Cancer Institute (NCI) for Patient Navigators for the Cancer Continuum as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA) to enhance and support breast cancer screening efforts at the People's North County location. The team was awarded two years of funding beginning in September 2009. Over the course of two years, more than 98 percent of the total grant funds awarded (\$100,000 per year) will be used by People's to enhance its mammography program. Through this grant, People's will be able to provide a full-time patient navigator at the North County site to identify and guide North County women due or overdue for a mammogram through the breast cancer screening process, a mammography technician to perform the mammograms in north county, and a data assistant to help track mammography-related details and progress. The funds also provide co-pay assistance for patients who do not qualify for one of the State assistance programs and are unable to afford the costs associated with applicable mammogram-related clinic visits, if they cannot be waived or are not covered by another funding source.

From September 2009 to June 2010, a reported 339 age-eligible women from the North County location have been navigated through the center for breast cancer screening. Of these women, 331 have had their mammogram and/or clinical breast exam date scheduled. The patient navigator continues to make contact with these women to encourage them to keep their appointments. Of the women navigated, 60 percent were overdue for a mammogram, i.e. had not had a mammogram within the year prior, with 53 percent, 21 percent, and 25 percent overdue by 1, 2, and 3 years, respectively. The patient navigator's ability to reconnect these women to care will help assure mammogram adherence and hopefully eliminate disparities in breast cancer death rates over time.

When the patient navigator asks women about barriers to mammography use, women report concern about mammography costs as the most common barrier to seeking breast health care. In such instances, the patient navigator makes certain to educate women about resources available in the community including the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program in Missouri and Illinois to help cover the cost of screening for eligible women.

To date, significant progress has been made in identifying barriers to mammography use as well as increasing mammography use among women in an area in which these services were previously not offered by People's. Those actively involved in this project include Shivon Tannan, Lawrence Pruitt, Sherrill Jackson, and Mark Sanford from People's; and Victoria Anwuri, Jennifer Tappenden, Bettina Drake and Graham Colditz from PECaD.

# PECaD Profile: Timothy Pluard, MD



**Timothy Pluard, MD**

*Medical Oncology  
Siteman Cancer Center*

*To improve cancer care for patients of all backgrounds, diversity of clinical study participants is imperative. A major goal of PECaD is to increase minority participation in clinical studies so that it reflects the diversity in the patient population at Siteman Cancer Center. The Clinical Studies Outreach Program, a division of PECaD, works closely with the Protocol Review and Monitoring Committee to ensure appropriate representation of study participants. Investigators set targets for minority enrollment at study initiation and PECaD's Clinical Studies Outreach Team reviews progress of minority enrollment during study implementation. Lannis Hall, MD, MPH, radiation oncologist and PECaD Clinical Studies Outreach Team leader, follows up with study investigators regularly.*

In this issue, we highlight Timothy Pluard, MD, Assistant Professor of Medicine at Washington University School of Medicine. Dr. Pluard is a medical oncologist who specializes in malignant diseases of the breast. He practices at Siteman's Barnes-Jewish St. Peters campus and its main campus in St. Louis. He is a leader in enrollment of patients on clinical studies and is principal investigator of multiple breast cancer studies. Dr. Pluard also enrolls patients in other clinical studies currently conducted by other Siteman investigators. About 10% of all Dr. Pluard's patients are enrolled in clinical studies.

Dr. Pluard attributes his success in enrolling minority patients to clinical studies to no divine strategy. He does share that due to historical mistreatment of African Americans in the research arena, additional discussion is necessary to explain the many safeguards in place to protect clinical study participants. "Patients need to be reassured that their consent and ongoing participation in the trial is entirely voluntary." Detailed information regarding the success of all cancer therapies due to clinical study participation serves as a major incentive for enrollment regardless of race. He notes that an empathetic medical staff is imperative to successfully recruit patients to clinical studies and praises his team for an outstanding effort.

Despite successes, Dr. Pluard observes some challenges in recruitment of diverse populations to clinical studies. He notes the importance of including the patient's family and support system in the discussion about clinical studies. Other significant barriers include refusal on the part of certain medical insurance plans to allow clinical study participation. Despite these challenges, we would like to commend Dr. Pluard on his efforts in ensuring a diverse patient participation in clinical studies at Siteman Cancer Center.

*Thank you to Dr. Pluard and his medical oncology team for their excellent work to achieve diversity in clinical study participation.*

## **PECaD Builds and Expands on Progress with New Funding** *(continued from front page)*

identified by community partners including PECaD's Prostate Cancer Community Partnership, which will be actively engaged in project implementation and dissemination of lessons learned. Remaining pilot funding opportunities will be announced during the grant period for cancer disparities research among junior faculty. PECaD will continue its community outreach and engagement activities. Led by Dr. Vetta Sanders Thompson, Associate Professor at the George Washington Brown School of Social Work at Washington University, the program will advance and evaluate the effectiveness of promoting access to cancer prevention, diagnostic, and treatment services through multiple avenues including churches, community health providers, public libraries, targeted media, and rural health organizations and coalitions. Finally, the

program launches a Transdisciplinary Community-Based Research Scholars Program, led by Dr. Sarah Gehlert, E. Desmond Lee Professor of Racial and Ethnic Diversity at the George Warren Brown School of Social Work at Washington University. This training program will build on the substantial expertise at the Siteman Cancer Center, Washington University School of Medicine, and Barnes-Jewish Hospital to formalize training of the most promising participants in transdisciplinary community-based participatory research. The program focuses on both academic and community partners. The Siteman Cancer Center and its PECaD are excited to continue efforts to create a national model for eliminating local and regional disparities in cancer. For more information about PECaD email PECaD@siteman.wustl.edu or call 314-747-4611.

# 8th Annual Prostate Cancer Survivors and Awareness Walk

Hundreds of walkers participated in the 8th Annual Prostate Cancer Survivors and Awareness Walk held on Saturday, August 28, 2010. The purpose of the walk was to celebrate the victories of prostate cancer survivors and their families; provide prostate cancer educational information and screening at no cost to participants; and raise funds for prostate cancer research and services in the community. The walk is a project of 100 Black Men of Metropolitan St. Louis, Missouri Black Expo, and Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center.

The 1.8 mile walk began in downtown St. Louis at Keiner Plaza and ended at the Missouri Black Expo in America's Center Convention Complex. Participants enjoyed a noteworthy educational program on prostate cancer, living with, and after, prostate cancer, and informed decision-making about screening. Several community leaders took part in the program including Dr. Robert Grubb, III, Urologist at the Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center and Assistant Professor at Washington University School of Medicine, as well as PECaD Prostate Cancer Community Partnership volunteer Mr. Dewey Helms, a six-year prostate cancer survivor.

Many others were recognized with plaques for their efforts in the community to reduce prostate cancer disparities including the Siteman Cancer Center, its PECaD, The Empowerment

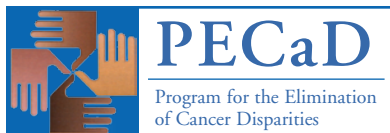
Network, and Mr. Richard Hess, Nurse Urologist at the Saint Louis University Cancer Center and PECaD Prostate Cancer Community Partnership volunteer. Prostate cancer survivors at the walk were honored with a medal from the American Cancer Society. There were 1,155 people registered for the walk, an increase of 27% from last year. Siteman and PECaD provided PSA screenings to 220 men at the Missouri Black Expo, which is about the same number of men screened in 2009. About 8% of men screened had elevated PSA results (>2.5 ng/mL).

Siteman physicians and staff provide direct follow up to all men based on their results.



*Laboratory staff gather for a group picture before screenings begin.*

The walk was sponsored by the Alvin J. Siteman Cancer Center (platinum sponsor); Missouri Black Expo, Missouri Lottery, and Anheuser-Busch, Inc. (community-level sponsors); US Bank, Saint Louis University Cancer Center, Allied Insurance, FOX 2 KTVI, and Hallelujah Radio AM 1600 (contributor level sponsors).



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