

American Cancer Society and American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Team Up with Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. to Reduce Burden of Cancer on African Americans

New Collaboration Tackles Cancer Disparities in African Americans

ATLANTA – September 14, 2010 – The American Cancer Society and its advocacy affiliate, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), are teaming up with Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. (AKA), to reduce cancer disparities among African Americans by helping the community stay well, get well and fight back against cancer. As a result, the Society, ACS CAN and AKA will work together to help create a world with less cancer and more birthdays by encouraging regularly scheduled cancer screenings, healthy dietary habits and regular physical activity, and avoiding tobacco use. The collaboration, which kicks off this fall, will focus on community-level engagements with AKA chapters nationwide to raise awareness of ways to reduce cancer incidence and mortality in the African American community.

According to the American Cancer Society^[1], disparities in the cancer burden among racial and ethnic minorities are largely the result of lack of access to cancer prevention, early detection and high-quality treatment. Racial and ethnic minorities also tend to receive lower-quality health care than the majority population, even when insurance status, income, age and severity of health and medical conditions are comparable. African Americans are more likely to develop and die from cancer than any other racial or ethnic group.

To help reduce these disparities, both organizations will co-host health forums at AKA regional conferences in New York, Atlanta, Chicago and Washington, D.C., that are designed to empower sorority members and the community at large with information to help them work to save lives from cancer. The Society will provide resources to help those who are faced with a cancer diagnosis; educate them on ways to stay well and prevent cancer; and engage them in research opportunities such as the Cancer Prevention Study-3^[2]. ACS CAN will encourage sorority members to get involved in legislative activities focused on increased federal funding for cancer research and the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program (NBCCEDP), which provides free or low-cost mammograms, Pap tests and follow-up treatment for the uninsured and underinsured, including racial and ethnic minority women.

“The opportunity to partner with the oldest sorority founded by influential black women in a grassroots effort to prevent cancer in African Americans was one we could not pass up,” said John R. Seffrin, PhD, chief executive officer, American Cancer Society and ACS CAN. “The American Cancer Society and ACS CAN are proud to work with Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc., to create a collaboration that will save lives from cancer through prevention awareness and policies that will help address the unequal burden of cancer among African Americans.”

“Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. looks forward to working with the American Cancer Society to raise awareness related to cancer risk factors, warning signs and treatment,” said attorney Carolyn House Stewart, Alpha Kappa Alpha’s international president. “This initiative is consistent with AKA’s primary mission of service to all mankind. Through health fairs and health forums, AKAs will distribute key information concerning cancer prevention, screening, and treatment. As a result of raising awareness related to preventive measures, we hope to decrease the occurrence of cancer and reduce the mortality rates of African Americans diagnosed with cancer.”

The American Cancer Society is committed to eliminating cancer disparities among racial and ethnic minorities, and has awarded more than \$88 million since 2000 for more than 100 studies that focus on reducing cancer health-related disparities. These studies range from prevention and early detection to end of life, and focus on a variety of populations where there is evidence of cancer health disparities, including African Americans.

ACS CAN is working at the state and federal level to enact legislation and public policies that will help reduce cancer disparities and improve access to quality, affordable cancer prevention, early detection and treatment for all Americans. ACS CAN supports increased funding for critical research that can help develop the detection tools and treatments needed to conquer cancer, and for programs that work to help prevent cancer or detect it at its earliest, most treatable stage.

About Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated (AKA), is an international service organization that was founded on the campus of Howard University in Washington, D.C., in 1908. It is the oldest Greek-lettered organization established by African American college-educated women. Alpha Kappa Alpha is comprised of a nucleus of 260,000 members in graduate and undergraduate chapters in the United States, the U.S. Virgin Islands, the Caribbean, Canada, Japan, Germany, Korea and on the continent of Africa. Its membership is comprised of distinguished women who boast excellent academic records, proven leadership skills, and are involved in the global community through advocacy and service. Alpha Kappa Alpha has dedicated itself to improving the quality of life for citizens worldwide and promoting peace. Since its founding 102 years ago, Alpha Kappa Alpha's mission has been Service to All Mankind.

About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society combines an unyielding passion with nearly a century of experience to save lives and end suffering from cancer. As a global grassroots force of more than three million volunteers, we fight for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. We save lives by helping people stay well by preventing cancer or detecting it early; helping people get well by being there for them during and after a cancer diagnosis; by finding cures through investment in groundbreaking discovery; and by fighting back by rallying lawmakers to pass laws to defeat cancer and by rallying communities worldwide to join the fight. As the nation's largest nongovernmental investor in cancer research, contributing about \$3.4 billion, we turn what we know about cancer into what we do. As a result, more than 11 million people in America who have had cancer and countless more who have avoided it will be celebrating birthdays this year. To learn more about us or to get help, call us any time, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.

About American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. ACS CAN works to encourage elected officials and candidates to make cancer a top national priority. ACS CAN gives ordinary people extraordinary power to fight cancer with the training and tools they need to make their voices heard. For more information, visit acscan.org.

[1] American Cancer Society Cancer Facts & Figures 2010, cancer.org/statistics

[2] Cancer.org/CPS3

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