

## “We Are a Powerful Movement”: Evaluation of an Endometrial Cancer Education Program for Black Women

Julianna G. Alson, MPH<sup>1</sup>, Ashley Nguyen, MPH<sup>4</sup>, Bridgette Hempstead<sup>2,3</sup>, Adrienne Moore<sup>3</sup>, Marjorie Wilson<sup>3</sup>, Liz Sage, MPH<sup>1</sup>, Gang Cheng, MS<sup>5</sup>, and Kemi M. Doll, MD, MSCR<sup>1</sup>

(1) University of Washington School of Medicine, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology; (2) Cierra Sisters, Inc.; (3) Endometrial Cancer Action Network for African Americans; (4) University of Washington School of Public Health, Department of Health Systems and Population Health; and (5) University of Washington, Department of Statistics

### What Is the Purpose of this Study/Review?

- The overall purpose of this study was to improve awareness of and provide education about endometrial cancer (EC) among Black women. We also wanted to increase confidence in talking about EC and related issues—like menopause and irregular vaginal bleeding—with friends, family, and medical providers.
- Our team built on an existing partnership between an academic research team, members of the steering group for the Endometrial Cancer Action Network for Endometrial Cancer, and Bridgette Hempstead, founder and CEO of Cierra Sisters, Inc., and creator of the original Community Empowerment Partners (CEPs)\* intervention.
- CEPS is an effective, evidence-based program for peer education on breast cancer in Black communities. Our specific aim was to adapt CEPs for EC, in equitable partnership with Bridgette Hempstead. We trained peer educators in delivering the adapted materials and implemented the program in communities across the country. Peer educators received mentorship from experienced health educators. Finally, we used surveys, interviews, and records of national meetings to measure changes in knowledge and confidence, in our trained peer educators and community participants.

### What is the Problem?

- In the United States, Black women are diagnosed with EC at about the same rate as White women. However, Black women are almost twice as likely to die of EC within 5 years of a diagnosis. This difference is mainly because Black women tend to be diagnosed at later stages (i.e., more advanced disease).
- From previous research, we know that one reason for later-stage diagnosis may be a lack of awareness of EC, its primary symptoms, and how it relates to menopause—the life stage during which most diagnoses occur.
- As far as we know, there have been no programs attempting to address the gaps in EC awareness and education, especially among Black women.

### What Are the Findings?

- Our surveys found that community session participants had more EC knowledge after participating in CEPs-EC sessions. They also had more confidence in talking about EC with friends and family.
- Interviews and meeting notes showed that the program was acceptable to participants, possible to be conducted in communities across the country, and our peer educators followed the overall program model.

\* Community Empowerment Partners (CEPs) is a copyright product of Bridgette Hempstead.

- We believe sessions were successful due to flexibility of the program, and the strength of the new community of peer educators. Peer Educators had the ability to tailor their sessions, and tapped into their social networks to help with planning. There was extremely high motivation in the group of peer educators for completing the community sessions and continuing participation in the program.
- We found that the peer educators also had higher “social capital” after holding their events, based on interviews and meeting notes. This means that relationships got stronger in a way that allows for more sharing of knowledge resources. This is important because it may mean there was even more knowledge shared in the broader community than what we measured. It is also important because other research has shown that having more social capital in Black communities can improve healthy behaviors and decrease the health harms that result from racial discrimination. The visibility of this community of Black EC survivors may continue to build social capital and allow knowledge to spread.

### Who Should Care Most?

- Leaders of health care systems seeking to improve EC survival among Black women and end racial health inequities.
- Researchers and community partners engaged in community-based EC education initiatives, or any cancer education initiative.

### Recommendations for Action

- Programs for EC education among Black women should be started at a large-scale on the national level, using CEPs-EC as a model.
- Cancer centers with community outreach centers could require community-partnered, EC education, using the CEPs-EC model as a guidepost.
- Elements of session tailoring, drawing on social networks for session planning, mentorship, and group-level motivation are important to ensure the success of CEPs-EC and similar programs.
- It is important to devote resources to maintaining a visible community of Black women EC survivors to ensure accessible information, opportunities for empowerment, and health-promoting peer relationships.