

HEALTH

Stand Up To Cancer® seeks to improve Black patient participation

(NAPSMI)--Overall, cancer deaths in America have fallen in the last several decades, but not everyone has benefited equally from advances in cancer prevention, detection and treatment.

Black people have the highest death rate and shortest survival of any racial and ethnic group in the United States for most forms of cancer. Additionally, FDA data show that only 4 percent of cancer clinical trial participants are Black.

That's why Stand Up To Cancer® (SU2C), a major funder of cancer research, created its Health Equity Initiative. The initiative aims to increase minority representation in cancer clinical trials and ensure new cancer treatments are effective for all.

"As one of the leading funders of cancer research, we believe it is our duty to ensure that minority representation in cancer clinical trials is addressed," explained

SU2C CEO Sung Poblete, PhD, RN. "Now, more than ever, better understanding of the role of biology in cancer treatment, advances in precision treatment and development of new technologies demands that we also make significant improvements in diverse clinical trial participation."

SU2C is collaborating with a number of industry leaders who are also committed to improving cancer disparities. Funding from these donors supports SU2C's Health Equity Initiative, including cancer screening and clinical trial awareness efforts as well as research into specific types of cancers that disproportionately impact people of color.

Another collaboration with the Black Women's Health Imperative and Friends of Cancer Research is Project TEACH, which will empower Black women to effectively engage with researchers and clini-



cians as well as increase participation of Black women in cancer-focused clinical trials.

"Ensuring that patients of color have the same access to screening, testing and treatment, including clinical trials, is critical to addressing some of the longstanding inequities we've seen in cancer care,"

said Karen Winkfield, MD, PhD, executive director of the Meharry-Vanderbilt Alliance and member of SU2C's Health Equity Committee.

For further facts and stats about Stand Up To Cancer, go to www.StandUpToCancer.org.

LifeSpring Community Health Continues to Offer Free COVID Testing. Vaccinations

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. -- As more and more residents continue to experience flu like symptoms and COVID case count continue to rise, officials at LifeSpring Community Health want to remind area residents that they continue to offer free testing and vaccines weekly throughout Chattanooga at the following days and locations:

Mondays
9 am - 11am
COVID-19 Testing
LifeSpring Community Health
-- 1042 East 3rd Street, Chattanooga

3 pm - 5 pm
COVID-19 Vaccines
Downtown Library -- 1001
Broad Street, Chattanooga

Tuesdays
3 pm - 5 pm

COVID-19 Vaccines
Avondale Recreation Center
1305 Dodson Avenue, Chattanooga

Wednesdays
2 pm - 4 pm
COVID-19 Vaccines
LifeSpring Community Health
-- 1042 East 3rd Street, Chattanooga

Fridays
9 am - 11am
COVID-19 Testing
LifeSpring Community Health
-- 1042 East 3rd Street, Chattanooga

1:30 pm - 3:30 pm
COVID-19 Vaccines
Downtown Library -- 1001
Broad Street, Chattanooga

The LifeSpring Community Health medical staff will use



Meghan Whitehead, nurse at LifeSpring Community Health, administers a COVID vaccine to patient.

rapid testing kits and results will be available within a few minutes. They offer first and second dose vaccines as well as boosters for anyone age 12 and older. Appointments are not needed and COVID-19 testing and vacci-

nations are free. Patients are encouraged to bring their vaccine cards if they are getting second shots and boosters. For more information, visit www.lifespring-communityhealth.org

The Bethlehem Center to Celebrate Black History Month with Lil Mama's Chicago Style Hoagy

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. -- The Bethlehem Center will celebrate Black History Month by hosting a giveback event with Lil Mama's Chicago Style Hoagy on Thursday, February 17 from 11 am - 6 pm EST. During this event, 15% of all food and drink proceeds will support the Bethlehem Center's Bethlehem Leadership Unit (B.L.U.). There will also be a game of black history trivia starting at 4 pm with special prizes for the winners.

The Bethlehem Leadership Unit is a Bethlehem Center program for high school students. This program strives to strengthen our youth's interpersonal skills and provide an outlet for them to enhance their leadership abilities. This is crucial as they prepare for higher education and the competitive workforce. B.L.U. helps to prepare students by providing social-emotional learning curricu-

lum, tutoring, enrichment experiences, community engagement opportunities, bible study, and more.

"Our giveback event with Lil Mama's Chicago Style Hoagy provides people with an easy way to support their local Chattanooga community while celebrating Black History Month. Participants will be supporting high school students in South Chattanooga, while enjoying a delicious hoagy and black history trivia. We hope this event encourages people to recognize black history not just in February, but everyday," said Sarah Addison Smith, Marketing Coordinator of the Bethlehem Center.

Those who can't attend this event can still participate by donating to the Bethlehem Center online at thebeth.org/donate.

For more information, please visit www.thebeth.org

Advocates Speak Out in Support of Life Sentence Reform Bill

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. -- Advocates along with concerned citizens, former inmates, parolees, and supporters of the life-sentence reform bill braved the piercing cold weather on M. L. King Day, this past Monday regarding HB 1532 to speak out in support of life sentence reform by the Tennessee legislature this session. Their gathering was held in front of the Chattanooga City Courts Building

According to the group's press release: The bill at issue, HB1532, is sponsored by Rep. Dan Howell, and passed overwhelmingly in the Senate last spring with sponsorship from Sen. Janice Bowling.

If enacted, it will return Tennessee's life sentence for first degree murder to what it was before 1995 -- life with parole eligibility after 25 years in prison. Since 1995, anyone sentenced to life in Tennessee must serve 51 years before they are eligible for release, making it in effect the same as a life without parole sentence.

Joining supporters and advocates at the press conference were elected officials Legislative District 28 House Rep. Yusuf Hakeem and Chattanooga City Councilwoman Demetrus Coonrod.

Rep Hakeem, former Chattanooga District 9 City Councilman, and former governor appointment to the Board of Probation & Parole, was in attendance to show full support of this bill. He is an avid

supporter of the rights of the disenfranchised, the justice involved and youth in our communities.

Chattanooga's current District 9 City Councilwoman and newly appointed member of the National League of Cities 2022 Public Safety and Crime Prevention Federal Advocacy Committee Demetrus Coonrod says, "We have to deal with the trauma people deal with, and we can't ignore that historically there has been a lack of opportunity, chance, and change. We have to address that."

Supporters say, the legislature's fiscal review committee estimates the bill will save taxpayers nearly \$2.5 million dollars each year, starting one year after its passage. Responding to concerns that the bill could create an undue burden on the parole board note that the bill's immediate impact will be extremely limited, because there are very few people serving 51-year life sentences today who have reached 25 years in prison.

The number of people serving these life sentences is small compared to how many parole hearings the Parole Board conducts each year. Due to reduced life expectancy for people in prison, about 30% of those currently serving this sentence aren't likely even to live long enough to see the parole board."