Welcome to the New CaRE² Center!

Launched by a five-year, $16 million grant from the National Cancer Institute, the USC-based Florida-California Cancer Research, Education, and Engagement (CaRE²) Health Equity Center will address cancer disparities in Black and Latino communities through:

- high impact and innovative research
- training and education of underrepresented minority students and early stage investigators
- culturally sensitive community engagement

In partnership with the University of Florida and Florida A&M University, a historically Black college, this initiative brings together investigators and institutions in the two US states that currently have the highest cancer incidence and mortality rates. Multidisciplinary teams at each institution will work within their diverse populations to facilitate the study of cancer disparities. The USC team spans faculty from the Keck School of Medicine (KSOM) and the USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology (LDSG).
Cancer Disparities

Patients from different racial and ethnic groups develop and succumb to cancer at very different rates. The cancer health differences between Whites and African-Americans or Latinos are particularly stark. For example, for all cancers combined, the death rate is 25 percent higher for African-Americans than for Whites, according to the National Cancer Institute.

Latinos have the highest rates for cancers associated with infection, such as liver, stomach, and cervical cancers. USC studies have found that African-American patients are more likely to die from certain types of cancer than other patients, even when their cancers have a better prognosis.

Many of the same population groups that experience cancer health disparities are also significantly underrepresented in cancer clinical trials, which raises the possibility that the results may not be fully applicable to them.

An important aspect of the bicoastal CaRE² center is the chance to look at the genetics of cancer health disparities across highly diverse communities in Florida and southern California. These include American-born, African-born, and Caribbean-born Blacks, as well as Mexican-Americans, Caribbean Latinos, and Central and South Americans.

How CaRE² Will Address Cancer Disparities

- Conducting basic, clinical, and epidemiologic research into factors that may influence cancer incidence and death rates
- Creation of a repository of biological specimens from African-American and Latino patients to help with future studies
- Collaboration with community partners to disseminate findings, educate target populations about pancreas and prostate cancer, and improve participation in biomedical research
- Training to increase diversity in the cancer and cancer disparities research workforce
Program Components

Research
- Studying the genomics and biological underpinnings of prostate and pancreatic cancer, which have high mortality rates in African-Americans and Latinos, to better understand the biology driving higher incidence and death rates
- Reducing differences in chemotherapy treatment by using the molecular profiles of patients to predict their sensitivity to certain drugs
- Creating a repository of biological specimens from African-American and Latino patients to help with this and future studies

Education
An important element of the new program is training the next generation of researchers in cancer health disparities. Through the CaRE² initiative, leaders will train about 125 Black and Latino investigators, from students to early career scientists, increasing the workforce focused on translational cancer and enhancing our scientific community.

Engagement
This program will build upon existing community partnerships to disseminate findings in the Black and Latino communities, educate people about pancreas and prostate cancer, and improve participation in biomedical research.

Mariana Stern and John Carpenten, leaders of the new CaRE² cancer health equity center at USC and partner organizations. (USC Photo/Gus Ruelas)
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Want to Join Us?

If you share our interest in reducing cancer health disparities, please consider becoming a member of the CaRE² center. Investigators, trainees, community leaders, and advocates are welcome. Learn more at https://bit.ly/2zQN3kS.

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