

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES CONNECTED AND ENGAGED

ISSUE 39, OCTOBER 2024

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

As we reflect on the past month, I'm filled with gratitude and pride for our community and the incredible strides we are making together.

First, I want to highlight the success of the Listening, Engaging, and Acting to Reduce Neighborhood Disparities (LEARN'd Conference), which took place from September 29 to October 1, 2024, right here in Hoover, AL. With 177 attendees, this groundbreaking event brought together academic, community, government, and industry leaders from across the nation. The overwhelming feedback from participants was heartening: "This is an amazing conference," "When is the next one?" and "I feel like this is the first time that everyone is being heard, even the community voice." These reflections affirm our collective commitment to fostering dialogue and understanding in our neighborhoods. Thank you to everyone who made this event a reality—we are excited about the conversations it has sparked and the potential for future gatherings.

In addition, I want to take a moment to celebrate our top engagers for July 2024. Congratulations to Kim Braden, our County Coordinator, and the dedicated Community Health Advocates (CHAs) in Jefferson County! Your tireless work in outreach exemplifies the spirit of engagement that drives our mission forward.

As we transition from the busy days of the last

season, I want to express my sincere appreciation to our entire team. Your steadfast efforts to extend wellness screenings across our catchment area through wellness days have truly made a difference in our community.

Looking ahead, let's gear up to celebrate the upcoming holiday months with health at the forefront of our minds. It's the perfect time to come together as a community, support one another, and prioritize our well-being. Thank you for being an essential part of this journey. Together, we can continue to make our communities brighter and healthier!

Warm regards,

- **Dr. Nolan**

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**O'NEAL** COMPREHENSIVE  
CANCER CENTER  
UAB THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

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# Community Dissemination Institute '24

From August 25-27, 2024, the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center's Office of Community Outreach & Engagement (OCOE) hosted the Community Dissemination Institute at The Lodge at Gulf State Park in Gulf Shores, Alabama. With the theme "Harmony in Health: Collaborative Approaches to Research, Education, and Screening to Achieve Cancer Health Equity," the event brought together 394 attendees, including 213 Community Health Advisors, 28 community partners, and 71 UAB clinician scientists and staff, all dedicated to advancing cancer prevention and care across Alabama.

Claudia M. Hardy, MPA, Chair of the CDI 2024 Planning Committee, reflected on the growth of the Institute since its first gathering in 2001. She emphasized the power of uniting community and academic partners to reduce cancer disparities. This year's Institute, the largest to date, continued to provide valuable opportunities for collaboration and co-learning.

Dr. Timiya S. Nolan, celebrating her one-year anniversary as Associate Director of OCOE, highlighted the event's focus on bridging gaps between the cancer center and the communities it serves. The event featured five breakout sessions and four "Speed Dating" rotations, where UAB researchers engaged directly with community members to gain insights into their most pressing concerns. Dr. Helen Krontiras, Director of Clinical Affairs at the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center, delivered a keynote address on the latest developments in cancer research and their impact on communities.



## Key Takeaways from the Institute:

- Encourage the use of a shared language between community members and scientists to facilitate better understanding.
- Provide more information on tobacco and vaping to address growing concerns.
- Expand clinical trials enrollment information to increase community access and participation.
- Use more accessible language when communicating about cancer to make information clearer for community members.
- Continue to foster connections between scientists and community partners for ongoing collaboration and knowledge sharing.

The event was made possible through the generous support of sponsors, including the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center, UAB Division of Hematology/Oncology, the Mike & Gillian Goodrich Foundation, Genentech, Acclinate, Merck, Exact Sciences, The Center for Black Health & Equity, Pfizer, the American Cancer Society, and St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Their support, along with the dedication of staff, clinicians, and community partners, ensured the success of this impactful event.





# Event Highlights

The Office of Community Outreach & Engagement (OCOE) at the UAB O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center hosted a successful Regional Wellness Day event at Wallace Community College in Selma. Led by Dale Bell, the dedicated county coordinator of Dallas County, the event exemplified the power of community partnerships in advancing health awareness and education.

The event saw an impressive turnout, with nearly 100 registrants and almost 90 attendees who engaged with the various activities and resources available. A key feature of the day was the biometric screenings, with over 50 individuals taking the opportunity to check their health status. This service is crucial for early detection and prevention, helping participants take proactive steps in managing their health. Mayor James Perkins, City of Selma was also in attendance and thanked O'Neal for bringing this invaluable service to this community.



## Regional Wellness Day - Selma

A Success in Promoting Community Health

The event also featured 43 vendors, each accompanied by their staff, showcasing a variety of health and wellness resources available to the community. Vendors offered information on services ranging from cancer screenings and fitness programs to nutrition and mental health support, reflecting the broad spectrum of health priorities addressed during the event.

A dedicated team of 42 volunteers, including local Dallas County Community Health Advisors and staff from OCOE, supported the event. Their commitment was essential to the seamless operation and success of the day's activities. In total, the event engaged approximately 173 individuals, demonstrating a strong community response and a collective commitment to improving health outcomes in Dallas County.

Regional Wellness Day in Selma is a testament to the impact that community-focused events can have in promoting health and wellness. We extend our gratitude to all volunteers, vendors, and attendees for making this event a success, and we look forward to continuing our efforts to support health equity in the region.

## LEARN'd

Listening, Engaging and Acting to Reduce Neighborhood Disparities

### CONFERENCE

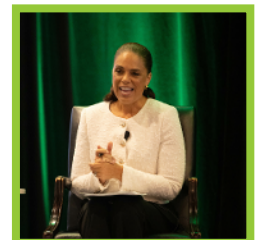
The University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), in partnership with The Ohio State University, proudly hosted the LEARN'd Conference 2024—Listening, Engaging, and Acting to Reduce Neighborhood Disparities (Alabamian Health Equity through Diversity Conference). Since its inception in 2022,

this annual event has united experts from across the country to discuss and implement strategies aimed at reducing health equity gaps.

This year's conference, themed "Collaborative Approaches for Cross-Cutting Solutions, Innovation, and Sustainability," engaged a diverse audience of, roughly 177 attendees, including 99 academicians, 52 community leaders, 4 industry professionals, and 12 government officials. These stakeholders came together to explore what communities, government organizations, universities, and corporations can do to reduce health disparities and promote well-being.

The event featured interactive sessions such as role-playing activities designed to help attendees navigate the sociopolitical climate surrounding health equity. Participants also collaborated on creating a comprehensive "roadmap" for implementing sustainable solutions that build on existing best practices.

UAB remains fully committed to reducing the disease burden and addressing health disparities within communities. By fostering collaboration through events like LEARN'd, we aim to develop and expand solutions that advance health equity.



## Support Our Patient Assistance Fund: Your Donation Makes a Difference

We invite you to join us in supporting the Patient Assistance Fund through the Office of Community Outreach & Engagement at the UAB O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center. Your generous donation will provide critical resources to patients facing financial hardships, helping them access essential cancer care, medications, and transportation services.

Every contribution, no matter the size, makes a tangible impact on the lives of those in need. Together, we can ease the burden for patients and their families during their cancer journey.

To donate or learn more, please scan the code below or contact our office directly.

Thank you for your support!



COE CAB member, Dora Bullard and husband, Wayne Bullard along with Chester Armstrong holds 4th annual Motorcycle Ride to support breast cancer. Proceeds from this event will be given to support COE Cancer Screening & Treatment assistance program.

