

Cancer

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oping breast cancer, and their risk for prostate cancer is about three times that of the average male. In addition, the risk for other cancers may be increased slightly.

If a mutation is identified; what can I do to reduce my cancer risk?

Knowing that you are at risk for certain cancers allows you to choose ways to reduce those cancer risks. This might include very close medical surveillance, chemoprevention with drugs such as Tamoxifen, or prophylactic surgery (removal of breast and/or ovaries).

Will insurance cover the cost of testing?

Most insurance companies now cover the cost of testing. In some cases, coverage may be at 100% while other companies may require a co-pay. The genetic counselor and the testing laboratory will work with you to determine your insurance coverage. Medicare covers 100% of testing in patients who meet Medicare guidelines. Although Medicaid does not cover testing, certain patients may qualify for free testing in some cases.

What about genetic discrimination?

When genetic testing first became available, many people had concerns about genetic discrimination; however, there are laws to protect against this, including HIPAA and other state laws. These laws typically apply to people insured in group plans.

What should I do if I decide to consider testing?

If you are interested in pursuing genetic testing, or if you would like to talk with a counselor, ask your doctor for a referral. Remember, knowing your family history has important implications for your own cancer risks. Knowing these risks allows you to take steps to reduce cancer risk.

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Do you need further information or have questions or comments about this article? Please call toll-free 1-877-530-1824. Or, for more information about the Maya Angelou Center for Health Equity, please visit our web site: <http://www.wakehealth.edu/MACHE>.



Photos by Layla Farmer

Susan Taylor (far right) poses with Layfayette Jones, Turquoise Erving, and Velma Watts. Seated is Jones' 91 year-old mother, Jimmie Ruth Jones.

Taylor

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community around the topics of health and education.

Taylor, the founder of the National Cares Mentoring Movement, is the spokesperson for the Feeding Dreams campaign, which has a goal of honoring 1,000 people across the nation. Radio Personality Steve Harvey serves as the initiative's media partner. Taylor said she's had many invitations to serve as a spokesperson in the past, but she always turned them down.

"This is the first time I've said yes to a corporation because I love what the Feeding Dreams program stands for," she declared. "It's the core of what we want in our own hearts and minds and certainly in our communities."

Taylor shared a bevy of dismal statistics regarding African American health and education and urged those present to take an active role in turning those numbers around through mentoring.

"We're not asking anything extraordinary of you," Taylor remarked. "We're asking that you become a mentor, that's all. Give one hour a week to encourage a child and say, 'Baby, you can do it.'"

Dr. Pamela Dockery-Howard, a faculty member at Winston East Pediatrics, was honored with the



Dr. Pamela Dockery-Howard poses with her husband, Alvin Howard.

Feeding Dreams Outstanding Mom Recognition during the luncheon. Dockery-Howard, a native of Raeford, was the first in her immediate family to graduate from high school. Though she didn't encounter an African American physician until she was in college, Dockery-Howard reported that she had dreamed of becoming a doctor since the age of three, when she lost her older sister to cancer. The UNC-Chapel Hill alumna was honored for her dedication to her patients, her medical students and her own family.

"I often talk about my patients as 'my kids.' People think I have a zillion kids ... and as a mother, I only want the best for my kids," she told the audience. "On behalf



Dr. Jacquelyn Jackson Fleming

of all of the mothers who are giving their lives to their children, I humbly accept this award."

SMSi Founding Chair Sandra Miller Jones said the goal of the Feeding Dreams luncheons is for the communities that SMSi visits during the initiative to continue the tradition of holding Get Togethers on their own.

"I'm hoping that in addition to having the national Get Togethers, that people will continue to have dialogue on health and education," said Miller Jones, one of three executive partners in the 33 year-old firm. "That's the main thing."

Attendees are also given a variety of sample products, courtesy of General Mills.

"Our primary business is distributing product samples," Miller Jones explained, "but we love to do that in a way that can be of benefit to the greater community."

Get Together attendees received information packets on health and

education, authored by Dr. Paul Cunningham, senior vice chancellor for Health Affairs at East Carolina University's Brody School of Medicine, and Dr. Jacquelyn Jackson Fleming, the former director of the US Office of Education's Student Achievement and School Accountability (SASA) division.

Jackson Fleming, president of the LifeLearn Associates education consulting firm, was on hand to share her insights in person. Fleming said education indicators continue to show African American and Latino students lagging behind their white counterparts in achievement, and affluent schools outperforming impoverished ones. She encouraged those present to search for innovative solutions to the disparities that exist nationwide.

"In order to ensure that we give each child an opportunity to learn to their highest potential, we have to stay the course and be proactive," she declared. "As much as we have done, we have to do more ... we must feed our dreams in order to make them bigger, better and brighter."

For more information about the Feeding Dreams initiative, visit www.feedingdreams.com. For more information about the National Cares Mentoring Movement, visit www.caresmentoring.org.

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