

The **10** *Dimensions*
of Georgia's
War on Cancer

A report of the Georgia Cancer Coalition's impact on our state



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If you're afraid of getting cancer, you're not alone.

Research shows that Americans fear cancer more than any other illness – and with good reason. It's estimated that by 2010, half of all Americans will get cancer in their lifetime.

Georgians have an even greater reason to worry. We're more likely than citizens in other states to face cancer. This year alone, more than 36,000 Georgians will be diagnosed with cancer, and a third that many will die from the disease.

These horrifying statistics point to a fundamental question: *What are we doing about it?*

Georgia's answer to that question is encouraging. Since 2001, when the Georgia Cancer Coalition was formed, Georgia has launched an intensive long-term effort to reverse trends in cancer-related death and suffering. The Coalition has orchestrated, leveraged and ignited efforts in every region of the state.

A clear picture is now emerging of these efforts and the impact they are having on the lives of Georgians. It is the picture of a statewide war on cancer, one that we view as having 10 dimensions. Taken together, these 10 dimensions represent the energy, ingenuity and hope that characterize the work of the Georgia Cancer Coalition and all other organizations involved in this effort.

While we take great pride in this work, we are ever mindful of the other fundamental question that must be asked: Can we do more? The answer to this question is not yes, but rather, *we must*.

ENVISIONING A DAY WHEN MORE GEORGIANS SURVIVE CANCER

The Georgia of tomorrow will be a place where fewer people get cancer, and where people with cancer have a far better chance of surviving the disease.

That's the vision of the Georgia Cancer Coalition. And just as President John F. Kennedy declared in May 1961 that the U.S. would have a man on the moon by the end of the decade, so too has Georgia declared war on cancer. By the year 2012, Georgia will be among the nation's leaders in cancer control.

Realizing this vision requires the Georgia Cancer Coalition to make significant progress toward five goals:

1. Prevent cancer and detect existing cancers earlier
2. Improve access to quality care for all Georgians with cancer
3. Save more lives in the future
4. Train future cancer researchers and caregivers
5. Realize economic benefits from eradicating cancer

Each of these goals carries specific objectives.

For example, Georgia is working to have two comprehensive cancer centers as designated by the National Cancer Institute – a designation that elevates the quality of care and brings millions more in federal research grants. Currently, Georgia is the largest state in the nation without an NCI-designated comprehensive cancer center.

The Vision

It began as a simple acknowledgment: *we need to do something.*

Christmas, 1999. Hamilton Jordan, the former White House Chief of Staff and a three-time cancer survivor, is chatting with Dr. Michael Johns, head of the Woodruff Health Sciences Center, at a holiday party. “I remember saying that we need to do something about cancer in Georgia,” Jordan recalls. “We started talking about how far behind Georgia was in so many ways. At the same time, we had all these pieces in place to do something about it.”

The pieces were formidable – leading research universities, prominent national organizations and agencies, millions of dollars in potential funding from the tobacco settlement. But they were not unified through a vision, nor were they organized into a coherent, focused strategy.

That began to change just one week after Jordan's conversation with Dr. Johns.

First came the outline of an idea. It was followed by scores of PowerPoint slides, all falling under the presentation title, “Georgia Cancer Initiative.” Then Jordan, Dr. Johns and others pitched then-Gov. Roy Barnes, who saw Georgia's need as a tremendous opportunity – and pledged \$500 million in tobacco settlement funds over 10 years to launch the effort. That amount was to be leveraged into a total resource commitment of a billion dollars.

And so a vision was born. Today, Gov. Sonny Perdue continues to support that vision. With the help of the Georgia Cancer Coalition, Georgia is seeing new results every day.

Hamilton Jordan's chance conversation was the first shot fired in Georgia's war on cancer.



A “unique digital dashboard” will provide a snapshot of Georgia’s progress in 52 areas of prevention, detection, diagnosis and treatment.

3.0 Prevention

4.0 Detection

5.0 Diagnosis

6.0 Treatment

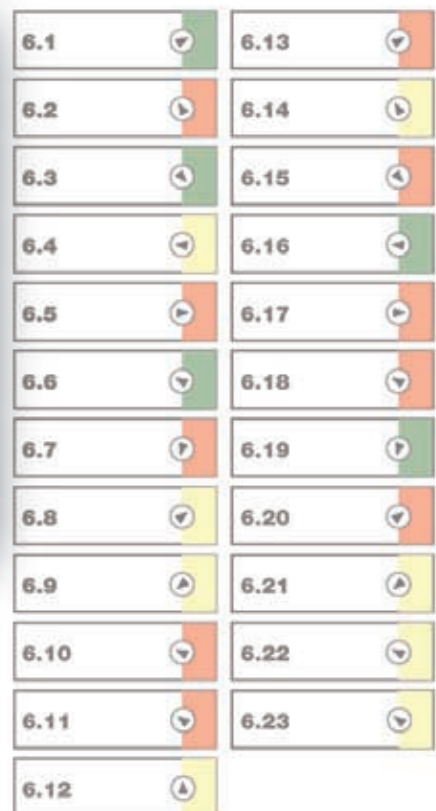


4.2 Breast Cancer Screening

Most women over the age of 50 in Georgia report having a mammogram in the past 2 years

Age	Percentage
40-49	49%
50-64	53%
65 +	51%

Careful monitoring is advised to continue to 'close the gap' in screening rates for low income and underserved women.



Georgia Cancer Data Report 2005
 Georgia Department of Human Resources
 and the American Cancer Society

The Strategy

That Georgia has a strategy to reduce cancer-related deaths is unique. But just as noteworthy is the state's commitment to learning how well its strategy is working.

To assess Georgia's progress in the war on cancer, the Georgia Cancer Coalition asked the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to identify a set of measures that relate precisely to the Coalition's five goals.

In spring 2005, an IOM special committee recommended 52 distinct measures of quality in cancer care, spanning prevention, early detection, diagnosis and treatment. The committee also recommended that Georgia chronicle the experiences of cancer patients as another indicator of the state's effectiveness, and that Georgia find ways to reduce cancer-related disparities of all kinds – ethnic, economic, geographic and racial.

GCC is bringing the 52 measures to life by creating a state-of-the-art information infrastructure to access, compile and analyze data for each measure. The result will be a single digital dashboard that provides a clear and complete snapshot of where Georgia stands – and where the state is heading – in all 52 metrics.

A UNIFIED, COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

A single idea – *collaborate to attack cancer on all fronts* – is at the heart of the Georgia Cancer Coalition's strategy to reduce cancer-related deaths in our state.

The strategy begins with collaboration. GCC recognizes that reducing the number of deaths and human suffering caused by cancer will require nothing less than the best minds from various sectors working together.

That's why the Coalition unites the state's doctors, hospitals, public health agencies, advocacy and survivor groups, universities, non-profits and businesses. Each sector has its own programs and priorities, which the Coalition unifies into a focused and coordinated effort – one that leverages state funds to spur outside investment.

Collaboration alone isn't enough, however. The Coalition has targeted every major front in attacking cancer. The strategy involves:

- Coordinating and helping to fund a nationally recognized research effort to find cures and better treatments
- Establishing a statewide family of cancer centers to upgrade the availability of world-class treatment
- Developing a statewide clinical trials network
- Enhancing Georgia's education programs in oncology for health care providers and caregivers
- Creating and enhancing partnerships with pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies
- Developing a statewide screening/detection network

A united and comprehensive approach is what it will take to win the war on cancer. And that's exactly what Georgia has.

A COMMITMENT TO GENERATING THE GREATEST POSSIBLE VALUE

Leverage.

That single word represents the driving principle behind the Georgia Cancer Coalition's investment in the war on cancer.

Leverage begins with a simple requirement: Every Coalition grantee receiving state funds is required to match those funds on at least a one-for-one basis.

But beyond this requirement is a larger commitment to get the greatest possible value out of the state's investment.

Some highlights:

- The number and value of National Cancer Institute grants to Georgia have soared since the Coalition was founded in 2000 – from \$14 million in 2000 to \$32.5 million in 2004.
- Cancer-related grants from the Department of Defense have also increased dramatically. So has support from the National Institutes of Health and the American Cancer Society.
- Civic groups and volunteers have given countless hours of time to organize events like cancer screening days, health fairs, and the Tour de Georgia.
- By checking a box on their state income tax forms, Georgians have contributed more than \$1 million to cancer research grants. Georgians in all 159 counties have also purchased breast cancer license plates – more than 38,000 so far – to provide \$1 million for screening and detection.
- GCC funds operations partially with private dollars and keeps expenses to a minimum, employing just five full-time staff.

The Investment

Anyone investing in the stock market would be thrilled with a 107 percent return on that investment in four years. And that's just what Georgia has received in its investment of tobacco settlement funds into the state's war on cancer.

In the four years since the creation of the Georgia Cancer Coalition, Georgia lawmakers have invested nearly \$245 million from the state's tobacco settlement to fund the prevention, detection, research and treatment of cancer. That generated more than \$262.5 million in outside funds and an untold number of in-kind services and contributions from individuals and organizations.

So far, the investment is paying off – and in a big way.

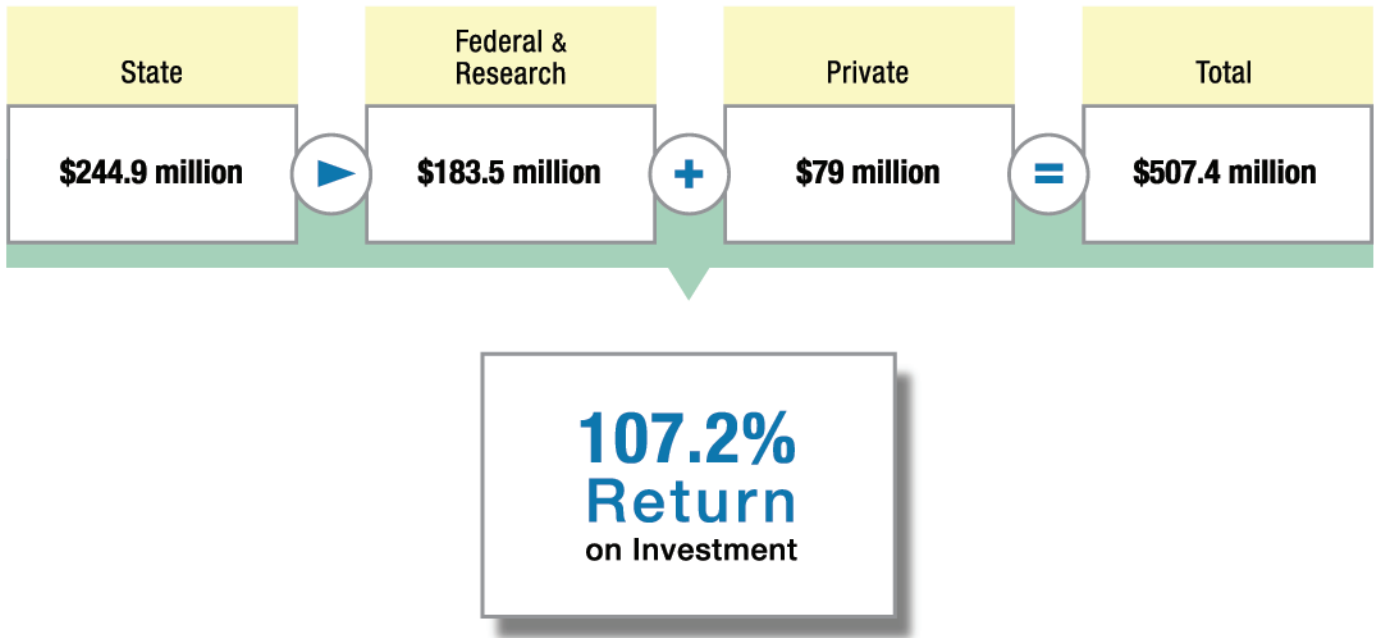
By recruiting 78 of the nation's most eminent scientists and clinicians to Georgia, for example, GCC has created a new pipeline for research grants. In building the Georgia Cancer Center for Excellence at Grady Health System – a project that included a \$4 million gift from the Avon Foundation – the Coalition created an enterprise that will serve patients for years to come. Even the 2005 Tour de Georgia, a single event built on a modest investment, spurred an estimated \$36 million in economic impact.

The breakdown of funding sources in Georgia's war on cancer – 48 percent from state resources, including tobacco settlement funds, and 52 percent from outside sources – signals that Georgia has a healthy and balanced portfolio of investment.

At the same time, cancer has proved to be a formidable foe. Conquering it requires that Georgia to build on its investment to generate greater returns, year after year.

Fortunately, the state can count on the Georgia Cancer Coalition to accomplish that aim.

In four years, the Coalition has more than doubled the return on the state's investment – and is poised to get even greater returns on future investment.





Dr. Michael Eriksen discovered that Georgia farmers are interested in growing crops that help prevent cancer, rather than cause it.

The Scholar

Georgia farmers are growing less tobacco and more soybeans, cucumbers and other crops. And one of the Georgia Cancer Coalition's Distinguished Cancer Scholars is working with the state's tobacco-growing community to better understand – and encourage – this trend.

Dr. Michael Eriksen led a team of researchers in a 2005 survey of more than 200 tobacco farmers in Georgia. The survey revealed:

- Four out of 10 farmers said they would stop growing tobacco in 2005 and beyond
- Nearly two-thirds expressed interest in training or education to grow new crops or raise livestock

“The bottom line is that the tobacco-growing community in Georgia is interested in transitioning from tobacco to other crops,” Dr. Eriksen says. “Many Georgia farmers are excited about using their expertise to grow a product that's potentially healthy, such as soybeans or berries, but they need help transitioning from one crop to another.”

The study, which was also supported by the Healthcare Georgia Foundation, showed that Georgia tobacco farmers would support a tobacco tax increase if a portion of the revenues were to go to preventing teen smoking or transitioning to new crops.

In 2004, the Coalition named Dr. Eriksen as one of its Distinguished Cancer Clinicians and Scientists. Dr. Eriksen, former head of CDC and World Health Organization initiatives on smoking and health, now heads the Institute of Public Health at Georgia State University – which matched the Coalition's investment dollar for dollar.

EMINENT RESEARCHERS ADVANCING SCIENTIFIC DISCOVERY

Dr. Michael Eriksen is one of 78 scholars in the Georgia Cancer Coalition's Distinguished Cancer Clinicians and Scientists program, or DCCS.

The program is a major component in the state's efforts to advance scientific discovery in preventing, treating and curing cancer. Through DCCS, Georgia has a highly effective vehicle for recruiting some of the world's most renowned scholars to the state – and for giving these scholars the agility needed to do their work.

The scholars themselves are widely regarded as thought leaders in cancer research.

Eight out of 10 have written at least one article that ranks in the top 10 percent of most-cited research in its field of study. Some serve as visiting professors at national cancer centers and research institutions, and most have presented at national and international symposia.

They also bring research investment to Georgia. As of 2005, the 78 scholars had generated more than \$120 million in grants to support their work and had tens of millions more in grant applications pending.

To learn more about the DCCS, visit www.georgiacancer.org.



The Event

It all happened so fast, but for those who were there, the sights and sounds will be embedded in the mind for a long, long time.

More than 1,000 cancer survivors and spectators lining the path into Atlanta's Centennial Olympic Park ... an emerging roar as seven cyclists streamed into the park ... the buzz and blur of the bikes, one of which featured cancer survivor and seven-time Tour de France winner Lance Armstrong, gliding past in seconds ... then gone.

But not for long. Moments later, the cyclists – members of the 2005 Tour of Hope team – were welcomed onstage by Gov. Sonny Perdue and other luminaries. The event: an electrifying Georgia Cancer Coalition rally celebrating the team's visit to Georgia.

Armstrong may have been the celebrity of the moment, but the real stars were the cancer survivors, caregivers, researchers, nurses and physicians who cycled across the continent, relay style – 3,300 miles in nine autumn days. Their trek was a reminder of just how far treatments for cancer have come.



The Tour of Hope roars through Georgia, heralding the promise of new and emerging cancer treatments.

COMING TOGETHER TO BATTLE A FOE

While the 2005 Tour of Hope rally was a proud moment in Georgia Cancer Coalition's history, it's actually one of many organized events that take place every week, all over Georgia, to fight cancer.

These occasions are more than circled dates on calendars. They're opportunities for Georgians to come together around an issue that affects so many – whether to learn, celebrate, share or remember.

Events are also opportunities to build support for the state's war on cancer. Take the Tour de Georgia, for example. The six-day professional cycling stage race and its associated series of festivals generated \$36 million in economic impact for the state in 2005 to advance the work of the Georgia Cancer Coalition.

Golf tournaments, sponsored walks, 5K races – these events and others populate the Georgia Cancer Coalition's online calendar at www.georgiacancer.org. Not included on this calendar are the countless other fundraising efforts organized locally to help individuals battling cancer pay for treatments or cover related costs.

The number and popularity of such fundraising events are a reminder of how much of a threat cancer remains to Georgia. And while there's no way to precisely measure the impact of all of these events, there's no doubt of their value. *They serve to unify us all.*

THE BEST THAT GEORGIA HAS TO OFFER IN RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND CLINICAL CARE

In the constellation of cancer care envisioned by the Georgia Cancer Coalition, the lodestars are the centers for excellence. These prestigious centers combine the best Georgia has to offer in research, education and clinical care.

With their synergy of cancer investigators, research programs, educational expertise and clinical service, centers for excellence develop new strategies and initiatives in cancer care. They not only battle to beat cancer in today's patients, but seek out new cures for tomorrow and train the cancer fighters of the future.

The Coalition established its first center of excellence in 2001. Located at Grady Memorial Hospital, it is a collaboration among the hospital, two medical schools and a university.

The second center for excellence is the Georgia Cancer Research Center, which combines the research, educational and clinical strengths of the Medical College of Georgia and the University of Georgia. Coalition funding will support a new cancer research facility and more than two dozen researchers.

With centers for excellence breaking new ground and Regional Programs of Excellence offering consistent quality care throughout the state, the Coalition hopes to achieve its goal: to give all Georgians access to the best cancer care anywhere.

The Enterprise

The indoor garden, burbling fountain and sunlit exam rooms take some visitors by surprise. Such warmth and serenity are not often associated with Grady Memorial Hospital, which is widely known for its tumultuous and expert trauma center in Atlanta's urban core.

Yet tranquility pervades the Georgia Cancer Center for Excellence, located on floors 9 and 10 at Grady.

When the Georgia Cancer Coalition selected Grady to be home to its first center for excellence, the leadership team of the new center – backed by a \$28 million investment from the Coalition – renovated 66,000 square feet of space to create a comfortable environment for cancer patients.

The enhancements have been more than cosmetic. The cancer center also has acquired state-of-the-art equipment for diagnosis and therapy. It has added nurses trained specifically in oncology, a dedicated pharmacology unit, and more case managers. Doctors from the Emory and Morehouse schools of medicine help staff the center, and scientists from Georgia State University are conducting lab research.

Among the center's priorities is reducing disparities in cancer care, an area in which the center's medical director, Dr. Otis Brawley, is regarded as a leading expert.

Because Grady is the healthcare hub for lower-income Atlantans, a first-rate cancer center at Grady will significantly improve the care given to the region's poorer patients. And the National Institutes of Health has named the center as a National Center for Health Disparities Research.

All of which make Grady an excellent location for the Coalition's first center of excellence. As Phil Lamson, the center's executive director, says, "If you wanted to make an impact, the place you would start is Grady."

Georgia's first Cancer Center for Excellence and its medical director, Dr. Otis Brawley, work to reduce the disparities of cancer care.





Dr. Shuming Nie and a team from Emory and Georgia Tech are analyzing tumors in ways never before possible.

The Discovery

A nanoparticle is unfathomably small – it would take 50,000 of them to equal the width of a single human hair. Yet the use of these minuscule particles is creating huge hopes for improving cancer imaging, detection and treatment.

In Georgia, turning these hopes into reality is the aim of a collaborative research effort involving scientists from two of the state’s leading universities. Dr. Shuming Nie believes the group’s work may take some of the mystery out of cancer therapy, improving the odds for quick, successful treatment.

Dr. Nie, who directs the Emory-Georgia Tech Nanotechnology Center for Personalized and Predictive Oncology, explains that the center’s research uses nanoparticles to analyze individual tumors in ways never before possible. This research reveals the cancer’s aggressiveness and its susceptibility to various forms of treatment. With this knowledge, doctors can immediately put a patient on the path of personalized treatment, one that is most likely to be effective for his or her particular case.

“It’s been known for over 100 years that the same drug does not work for everybody,” says Dr. Nie. “This is especially true of cancer.”

Dr. Nie came to Emory University in 2002 as a Georgia Cancer Coalition Distinguished Cancer Scholar. In October 2005, he and his team were awarded \$19 million from the National Cancer Institute to continue their research in nanotechnology as it applies to cancer treatment.

Other academic institutions are working on similar research, but Dr. Nie says the Emory-Georgia Tech collaboration has the advantage of having accumulated three years of data. “We are the closest to real, clinical application,” he says.

A RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF THE NEXT GREAT DISCOVERY

Some of the most pivotal battles in the war against cancer are fought not in hospitals but in laboratories. And thanks to the Georgia Cancer Coalition, more of the nation’s leading cancer research labs are right here in Georgia.

The next great discoveries in cancer research could come through any number of the Coalition’s programs, including:

- Distinguished Cancer Clinicians and Scientists. In four years, GCC has recruited 78 eminent cancer researchers to Georgia universities and hospitals.
- Georgia Center for Oncology Research and Education (CORE). This statewide research network uses technology to better connect medical schools and practitioners, with maximizing clinical trials in Georgia as a primary goal.
- Tumor and Tissue. Scientists throughout the state will be able to borrow actual tissue specimens for use in their research. Such specimens are a critical but scarce resource for study and experimentation.
- Cancer research awards. GCC has given more than \$1 million to research deemed “outstanding” by a panel of oncology experts. This award program is funded by voluntary donations from Georgia taxpayers.

By creating a supportive environment for cancer research, GCC ensures that Georgia is a focal point for ground breaking investigation ... and that all Georgians will benefit.

THE RPE INITIATIVE: EYES, EARS, HANDS AND FEET IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CANCER

When the Georgia Cancer Coalition looked at statewide cancer mortality rates, and then at the available resources for fighting cancer, the equation didn't add up.

Georgia is home to a wealth of organizations working to reduce cancer deaths. Yet many Georgians, especially those in rural areas, do not receive quality cancer care.

To ensure that all Georgians have access to the best care possible, the Georgia Cancer Coalition established a statewide initiative: Regional Programs of Excellence (RPEs). Some are led by hospitals, others by academic institutions or departments of public health.

All RPEs must meet standards of excellence, and all of them share a common mission: to spark more collaboration and reduce duplication among care providers in the region, so that the state's existing talent and resources will be put to better use.

The Coalition provides the Regional Programs of Excellence with funding, staff training and other support. It also holds regular meetings of a coordinating council, at which RPE representatives share their challenges and successes. The RPE Council not only helps program leaders learn from each other, but also serves as a feedback system to inform the Georgia Cancer Coalition about efforts to combat cancer around the state.

"We are the eyes and ears and hands and feet in the war on cancer", says Nannette Turner, executive director of one Regional Program of Excellence. Turner says the regional programs have a sincere commitment to replace competition with collaboration. "We know we're part of an effort to reach all Georgians, so that everyone can have access to quality care."

The Initiative

When Mary Williams talks with people about protecting themselves against cancer, they open their ears and minds. That's because she's someone they know and trust – a familiar face from the community, a friend from church.

Williams is one of 14 community health advisors with the West Central Georgia Cancer Coalition, one of the Georgia Cancer Coalition's Regional Programs of Excellence. Through their personal rapport with their neighbors, the advisors have persuaded hundreds of Georgians to attend local health fairs and cancer screenings, events that are key to detecting cancer early – and treating it immediately.

Whenever an organization needs a community connection to support a cancer-fighting effort, the community health advisors are ready.

For example, the Columbus-based John B. Amos Cancer Center is launching a program that will send a physician and nurse practitioner directly to rural areas to screen people for cancer. The health advisors will ensure that local folks take advantage of the opportunity. For people who need it, the advisors even arrange transportation.

Nannette Turner, who heads the West Georgia coalition, believes that the partnership with the Amos Cancer Center – and the official affiliation with the Georgia Cancer Coalition – helped the center win the CDC grant that funds the effort.

Being designated a Regional Program of Excellence has yielded more than \$800,000 in state funding, Turner says. "It's also given us credibility with our donors here in our area," she says, "and hopefully with some of the organizations we might apply for nationally. It tells them we have met standards of excellence."

Cancer prevention comes to the beauty salon and other unlikely places in West Central Georgia.



Physicians like Dr. Jim Hotz are at the front lines of prevention and treatment.



The Doctor

It will never be known how many years Dr. Jim Hotz has added to the lives of Georgians, but the numbers must be staggering.

Not only does Dr. Hotz treat patients – more than 5,000 appointments a year – but he also teaches people in some of the state’s smallest communities what they need to do to avoid cancer and enjoy healthy, productive lives.

“In this country, you have life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness,” Dr. Hotz says. “But if you don’t have life, you don’t have the others.”

Beyond practicing medicine and preaching prevention, Dr. Hotz spearheaded the Southwest Georgia Cancer Coalition, one of nine “Regional Programs of Excellence” that the Georgia Cancer Coalition has spawned across the state.

The program is badly needed: Cancer rates in Southwest Georgia are 35 percent higher than those for the state as a whole, and cancer there is usually diagnosed at late stages, making a full recovery less likely.

Dr. Hotz and other doctors and staff in the southwest coalition are taking aim at those statistics. They’re mobilizing communities like Baker County, where after just one meeting, ministers, school administrators and elected officials vowed to make their community the nation’s leader in cancer screening. And they’re working to provide full access to state-of-the-art cancer care for every citizen in the region.

“What Georgia is doing is a strategic investment that’s really paying off,” Dr. Hotz says. “People around the country are starting to look at us and say, ‘Georgia really has its act together.’”

PHYSICIANS LEAD THE WAY IN MORE THAN ONE WAY

At this moment, tens of thousands of Georgians are waging their own personal war on cancer, and nearly every one of them is under the care of a physician. That’s why doctors and their professional staffs are crucial to Georgia’s efforts to reduce deaths and suffering from cancer.

How effective these medical practices are comes down to two factors: Knowledge and resources.

The Georgia Cancer Coalition has sparked several initiatives to provide more knowledge and resources to the state’s doctors. And physicians have led the way in a number of efforts, with GCC at their side.

Two examples stand out. One is the Georgia Center for Oncology Research and Education, or Georgia CORE. An ambitious partnership with the state’s clinical oncologists, Georgia CORE has launched a statewide clinical trials network, the only one of its kind in the nation. The Center unites researchers from community and academic settings to design and implement clinical trials offered here in Georgia. A web-based registry of clinical trials called “Trial Check” provides vital information for patients, family members and healthcare professionals (www.georgiacancertrials.org).

The second example is the development of a statewide tissue bank to give clinicians and scholars ready access to safe and reliable tissue and cell products for study and experimentation.

Increasingly, Georgia’s scientists and researchers must delay their work because they don’t have the necessary tissue samples to determine the best alternatives for cancer treatment. The Medical College of Georgia (MCG) serves as the central repository for the state’s oncology tumor, tissue and serum bank. MCG is working with hospitals in Atlanta, Decatur, Savannah, Brunswick and Dalton to create a seamless collection and distribution system.

CATCHING ‘LATE EFFECTS’ EARLY TO STRENGTHEN SURVIVORSHIP

As many as two-thirds of all children who survive cancer suffer “late effects,” or complications related to the disease or treatment.

These effects can be harsh. Growth and development, particularly during puberty, may be disturbed. Vital organs such as the lungs and heart can suffer damage. The children might even struggle in school.

Spotting these late effects early is crucial.

That’s why the Georgia Cancer Coalition is funding a pilot program in cancer survivorship at Children’s Health Care of Atlanta-Emory. The program – created and provided by the Aflac Cancer Center and Blood Disorders Service at Children’s – supports ongoing monitoring of any young Georgian treated for childhood cancer who has been off treatment for two years.

“Aflac is the only cancer center in Georgia with a multidisciplinary team dedicated exclusively to survivorship,” says Dr. Lillian Meacham, medical director of the Aflac center’s Cancer Survivor Program. “We wanted to be able to extend what we’re doing here at the Aflac Cancer Center to support other centers in the way they felt was most helpful.”

Dr. Meacham says the goal is to give every Georgia child who survives cancer the opportunity to be evaluated and monitored for late effects. Her goal is to work with centers around the state to assure that every child treated for cancer is afforded a medical summary, individualized risk profile and a survivorship road map to guide long-term follow up. Health care practitioners could also receive special training and educational materials.

“It’s so important that we don’t just help children survive – we help them thrive,” she says.

As a child, Kati Tanner persevered over cancer. Now, she’s working to help others survive.

The Survivor

Though it was 17 years ago, Kati Tanner still remembers the nine words her doctor said to her parents, as if they were spoken yesterday: *Your daughter has cancer, and it doesn’t look good.*

Those nine words began an intensive 18-month regimen of treatment that included three-week cycles of aggressive chemotherapy – and the amputation of Kati’s left leg when she was just 8 years old.

Kati’s cancer was Ewing’s sarcoma, a type most often found on the pelvic bone or femur. About 150 children and adolescents are diagnosed with Ewing’s each year, and the survival rate after five years is about 60 percent.

Kati’s best friend, Dustin Dove, was one who didn’t survive. Dustin died of osteogenic sarcoma at age 14, and his was one of many funerals Kati attended in her youth. “Cancer is easy, compared to losing a friend to cancer – that’s hard,” Kati says. “No kid should have to give the eulogy at a friend’s funeral.”

The loss of several friends inspired Kati to dedicate her life to fighting pediatric cancer.

Today, she works at Cure Search, a non-profit organization seeking to cure childhood cancer, and speaks to numerous organizations. She also helps children and teens with cancer by volunteering at Camp Sunshine, which she attended every summer beginning at age 9.

“What you see in kids today is astounding,” she says. “They’re so much more amazing than I am.”



What can you do?

- Buy a breast cancer license plate
- Check the box on your state income tax form
- Make a gift to the Georgia Cancer Coalition
- Take the Healthy Georgia Promise
- Support efforts to build on Georgia's investment in the war on cancer

More on all of the above at www.georgiacancer.org



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