THE

PINKPRINT

CHICAGO EDITION

A STRATEGY TO ELIMINATE BREAST CANCER MORTALITY
IN AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN ON CHICAGO'S SOUTH SIDE

ELEVATED SURVIVORSHIP

paf Patient Advocate Foundation

CONTENTS

WELCOME

ELEVATED SURVIVORSHIP

Welcome to **The Pinkprint: A Strategy to Address Breast Cancer Mortality in African American Women on Chicago's South Side.**

This initiative represents a deeply personal and collective commitment to the health and well-being of African American women in our community. At Elevated Survivorship, our mission is to transform the journey of survivorship into one of empowerment, resilience, and equity. We believe that every woman deserves access to the care, resources, and support necessary to not just survive but thrive after a breast cancer diagnosis.

Even after revealing landmark research in 2009 by Drs. Steve Whitman and David Ansell, and monumental advances in breast cancer screening and treatment, African American women continue to face disproportionate challenges in breast cancer diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship. The Pink Print is our roadmap to address these inequities head-on, rooted in the voices of survivors, advocates, and healthcare leaders who share our vision of change.

Through collaboration, innovation, and unwavering dedication, we aim to dismantle barriers, amplify survivor stories, and create sustainable solutions that reduce disparities and save lives. The Pink Print is more than a document; it is a call to action, a testament to resilience, and a pathway to hope.

Thank you to the Patient Advocate Foundation for entrusting us with this work, to Shonta Chambers and Ariel Thomas Sansing for your leadership, to everyone who joined us at the April convening of the Chicago Better Together Breast Cancer Mortality Think Tank launch, every Think Thank member for your commitment, and to everyone else rooting for us along the way, thank you for joining us on this journey. Together, we can reimagine what survivorship looks like for African American women, ensuring that every story is met with compassion, every need with action, and every life with dignity.

With gratitude and determination,

Angela K. Waller, MA
Founder & CEO

WELCOME

PATIENT ADVOCATE FOUNDATION

December 2024

The year was 2019 when a divinely orchestrated encounter would later be the spark to bring together six women who looked deeper into breast cancer mortality disparities on Chicago's Southside and asked, "What can we do together?" Then and now we realized that efforts to impact breast cancer disparities will take all of us.

The Pinkprint represents a commitment to action and a galvanizing framework to drive sustainable change to Chicago's Southside to address four issues identified by community residents to improve breast health.

At PAF our mission to address systemic barriers to healthcare access and affordability is strong. This commitment was fortified in 2014 when we established addressing health equity as a strategic imperative. Our actions to make this a reality would require a mobile movement that would take us into communities to understand their specific challenges, integrate ourselves into solutions-focused activities, and ignite conversations and engagement, when necessary.

PAF is so excited to co-create and implement the activities within this document with the Chicago community of amazing partners.
We are truly *Better Together*.

Sincerely,

Shonta Chambers, MSW
EVP Health Equity Initiatives & Community Engagement

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

Breast cancer mortality rates on Chicago's South Side, particularly in underserved populations of African ancestry, are among the nation's highest. The Patient Advocate Foundation in collaboration with several local breast cancer organizations, including Elevated Survivorship, convened a community conversation to hear from residents to identify the root causes of the pervasive inequities in breast cancer mortality and service and resource gaps in 2019. These priority areas reflect the intersectionality of societal factors and physical health and well-being. We think of them as opportunities for intervention: Cancer Care Continuum, Environmental Justice, Nutrition Justice, and Social-Emotional Well-Being.

The Chicago Better Together Breast Cancer Disparities Think Tank was launched in April 2024 to facilitate sustainable community-driven solutions to this complex and decades-long health inequity. The Think Tank has a diverse membership comprising community members, advocates, patients, caregivers, medical professionals, researchers, and policy professionals. Workgroups have been formed for each priority area and are currently working to create objectives and an action plan.

Our strategy, the Pinkprint: Chicago Edition, aims to champion multi-level interventions that will transform the healthcare and social landscape for everyone but with specific attention to the needs of African American women living on the South Side and South Suburbs of Chicago.

FINDINGS FROM DATA REVIEW

Higher rates of invasive breast cancer in some Southside communities highlighted during the 2019 community conversation suggests that while women on Chicago's Southside are accessing mammography screenings, they experience a higher rate of later stage diagnoses than the City average.

ABBREVIATED LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS FROM 2024 THINK TANK ACTION PLANNING

CANCER CARE CONTINUUM

- Refine and implement the Breast Cancer Excellence in Screening (BEST) Act (PL99-433) to provide/create funding for services

- Create tools to support intergenerational discussion about family health history and enact a culturally relevant campaign to dispel myths about breast cancer and healthcare
- Improve collaboration and marketing of safety net medical centers

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- Launch comprehensive research study on environmental factors and breast cancer outcomes
- Develop community resilience hubs integrating health education and clean energy demonstrations
- Draft policy proposals linking environmental cleanup to cancer prevention

NUTRITION JUSTICE

- Serve as a champion and collaborator in Chicago's nutrition and food justice infrastructure
- Define the burden of nutrition insecurity on the Southside of Chicago
- Expand hyper-local community-driven strategies that advance nutrition justice

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

- Develop mental health support resources and fortify network of support for African American breast cancer patients living on the Southside
- Develop and implement a tool to assist patients in reflecting on their emotional state and identify areas where they may need additional support
- Cultivate and foster the existing faith leader coalition on Chicago's Southside as an additional support network for breast cancer patients and survivors

CONCLUSION

Pervasive systemic and structural inequities continue to perpetuate breast cancer mortality disparities among African American women on Chicago's Southside. Pairing community-driven local-level interventions with strategic policy proposals informed and driven by the expertise of survivors, patients, caregivers, and advocates can move the needle toward ending the decades-long mortality disparity in Chicago.

BACKGROUND

2019 COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

On Tuesday, March 28, 2019, Sisters Working It Out and Patient Advocate Foundation convened a community conversation at the Kroc Center in Roseland. A group of 40 community stakeholders representing nurses, educators, health care professionals, breast cancer survivors and faith-based members galvanized to create change for black women on the southland area. The following organizations were represented Sisters Network Chicago Chapter, Different Shades of Pink/ Brave Chick Charities, Mile Square Health Center, Lilydale First Baptist Church and Matters At Heart. The group discussed data highlighting the scope of breast cancer disparities in their communities, identified service gaps contributing to the problem and prioritized solutions to address breast cancer disparities on the Southside.

Since the community conversation, Sisters Working It Out, Patient Advocate Foundation, and a small group of community partners have been working to prioritize the recommendations provided by stakeholders. One of the most favored suggestions was investigating environmental factors impacting cancer outcomes. Shortly following the meeting, we researched the feasibility of conducting an environmental study of the Southland area, what was discovered is that EPA studies are costly and often inconclusive. To ensure that the information provided is used for meaningful and sustainable action, we prioritized a list of actionable recommendations with a focus on strengthening residents' ability to work together to create systems change. At that time, block clubs and faith organizations were targeted to capitalize on where residents were already gathering. This conversation represented the beginning of a movement to save lives on the Southside.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR INTERVENTION

CANCER CARE CONTINUUM

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

NUTRITION JUSTICE

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

VOICED FROM PARTICIPANTS

A COMMUNITY OUTRAGED

"I've lived here over 30 years, but I'm just appalled at this information and the fact that nobody seems to care."

...

"I'm angry and I feel that there's a sense of urgency around advocacy and education, and really going beyond, kind of like what we're doing here today."

...

"I know the power that we have in numbers as women. We deserve better, and we can do better."

...

"They are using dollar stores for food stores in our community, gas stations."

IDENTIFYING GAPS

"So if you look at the communities of color, all the hospitals that sit in our communities, there is a lack of trust that you're going to get good care, that you're going to be diagnosed with the right thing."

...

"So, we all suffering in silence now, about this, because I don't want to share with anybody."

...

"All the gases coming from that decomposing material was going into the environment. We had more special ed kids and more cases of cancer. It was just ridiculous."

SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS

"...it would be really cool to bring food trucks in with certain things, or even that Rosebud place would be a good place for a farmer's market. I like the idea about showing people how to cook."

...

"We've got to get the hospitals to come out more, to engage more with the community, because if I don't trust you, I'm not going to come to you for anything, that's a problem."

...

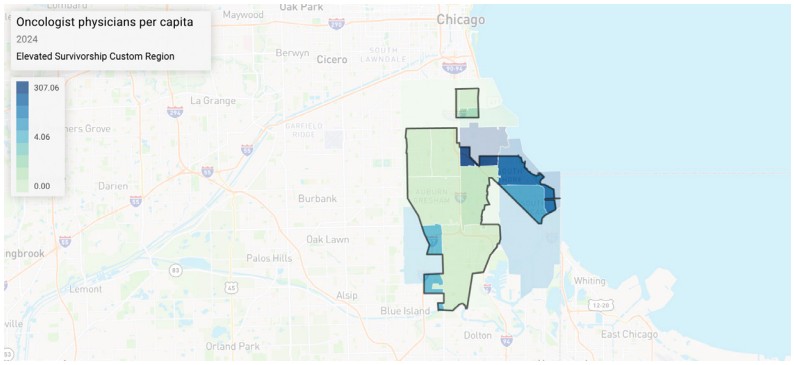
"I would organize and strengthen block clubs, because it's family by family, house by house, block by block."

...

"Reach out to the churches... it's a lot in this area. They are very resourceful. They have a lot of information, and we have avenues to spread the information."

COMMUNITY AREAS DATA

ACCESS TO MAMMOGRAPHY/ONCOLOGISTS/PROVIDERS

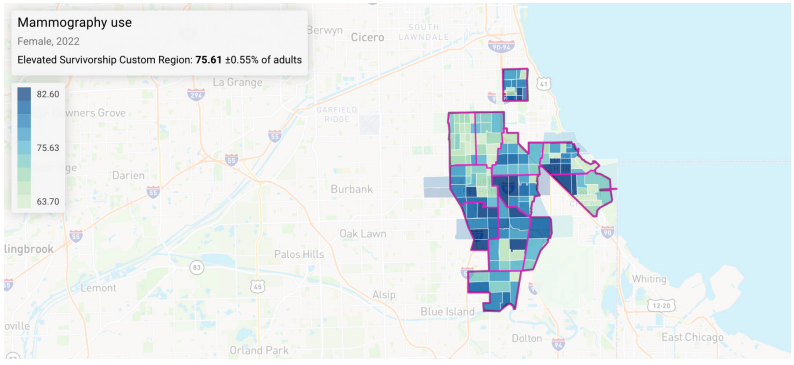


Metopio | Tiles © Mapbox, Data sources: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) (County and state level data), Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC): PLACES (Sub-county data (zip codes, tracts)

Map of oncologists and providers per capita in Elevated Survivorship target communities. Darker colors represent areas with higher numbers of providers, lighter colors represent areas with lower numbers of providers.

Women in our target communities have varying access to oncologists, which could impact their ability to receive treatment. For example, parts of Greater Grand Crossing and South Shore have an average of 307 oncologists per 100,000 residents compared with zero oncologists per 100,000 residents in Englewood, Auburn Gresham, and Chatham.

MAMMOGRAPHY USE



Metopio | Tiles © Mapbox, Data sources: Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) (County and state level data), Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC): PLACES (Sub-county data (zip codes, tracts)

Map of mammography use in Elevated Survivorship target communities. Darker colors represent higher mammography use, lighter colors represent areas of lower mammography use.

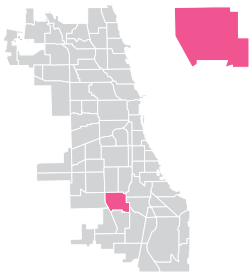
Mammography use across Cook County is relatively high, and women in our target communities are receiving screenings at rates that are similar to or above the average for the county.

COMMUNITY DISPARITIES

Breast cancer doesn't affect everyone equally. Our data review reveals the stark disparities in breast cancer rates across specific Chicago communities. These disparities are rooted in systemic issues like poverty, pollution, and lack of access to healthy food and healthcare. These social determinants of health create a toxic environment that increases the risk of breast cancer and worsens outcomes.

While women are accessing mammography screenings, the higher rates of invasive breast cancer in some communities suggests that they may be getting screened after the disease has already spread. The data presented here underscore the continued need for targeted interventions to address the root causes of health disparities and improve breast cancer outcomes in our targeted communities.

AUBURN GRESHAM



28%

Higher rates of **non-invasive breast cancer diagnosis** than City average

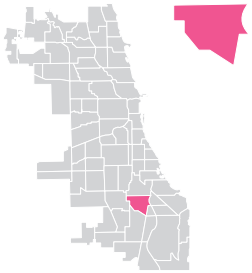
34%

Higher rates of **invasive breast cancer diagnosis** than City average

12%

Higher percentage of adults reporting **poor mental health** than City average

CHATHAM



41%

Higher **non-invasive breast cancer rate** than City average

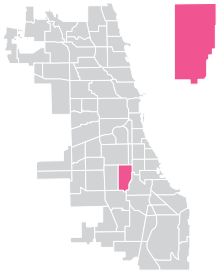
50%

Higher percentage of residents experiencing **food insecurity** than City average

82%

Higher percentage of residents **living in food deserts** than City average

ENGLEWOOD



14%

Higher rates of **invasive breast cancer diagnosis** than City average

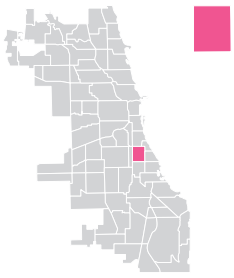
62%

Higher percentage of residents experiencing **food insecurity** than City average

26%

Higher percentage of adults reporting **poor mental health** than City average

GRAND BOULEVARD



22%

Higher rates of **invasive breast cancer diagnosis** than City average

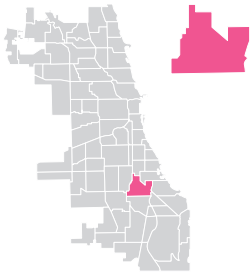
32%

Higher proximity to **potential chemical accidents** than City average

23%

Higher **diesel particles in air** than City average

GREATER GRAND CROSSING



6%

Higher rates of **non-invasive breast cancer diagnosis** than City average

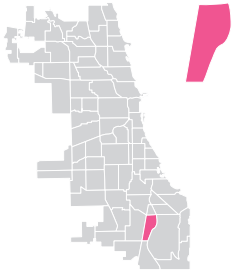
19%

Higher rates of **invasive breast cancer diagnosis** than City average

17%

Higher percentage of adults reporting **poor mental health** than City average

PULLMAN



33%

Higher rates of **invasive breast cancer diagnosis** than City average

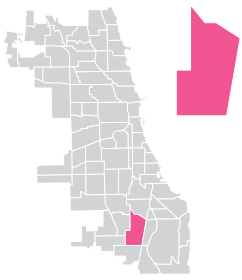
34%

Higher proximity to **potential chemical accidents** than City average

112%

Higher percentage of residents experiencing **low food access** than City average

ROSELAND



113%

Higher percentage of residents **living in food deserts** than City average

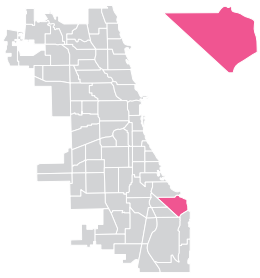
101%

Higher percentage of residents experiencing **low food access** than City average

35%

Closer to **water polluting sites** than City average

SOUTH CHICAGO



13%

Higher rates of **invasive breast cancer diagnosis** than City average

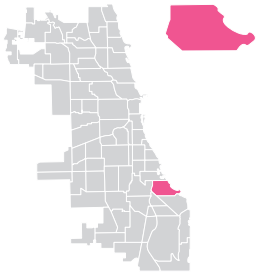
17%

Higher percentage of adults reporting **poor mental health** than City average

40%

Higher percentage of residents experiencing **food insecurity** than City average

SOUTH SHORE



40%

Higher percentage of residents experiencing **food insecurity** than City average

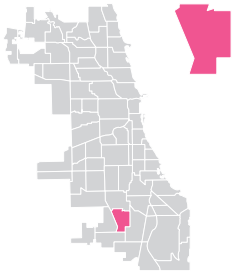
113%

Higher percentage of residents **living in food deserts** than City average

90%

Higher percentage of residents experiencing **low food access** than City average

WASHINGTON HEIGHTS



39%

Higher **invasive breast cancer rate** than City average

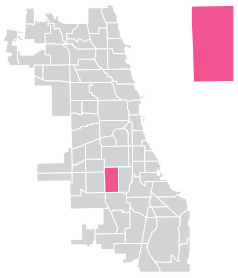
98.9%

Higher percentage of residents experiencing **low food access** than City average

116%

Higher percentage of residents **living in food deserts** than City average

WEST ENGLEWOOD



22%

Higher rates of **invasive breast cancer diagnosis** than City average

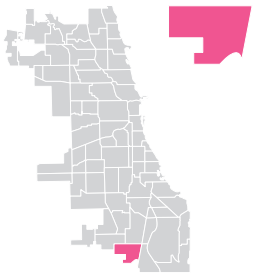
97%

Higher percentage of residents experiencing **low food access** than City average

25%

Higher percentage of adults reporting **poor mental health** than City average

WEST PULLMAN



135%

Closer to **water polluting sites** than City average

98%

Higher percentage of residents experiencing **low food access** than City average

163%

Higher rates of residents **living in food deserts** than City average

Citation: Ranking Table of Key Variables by Neighborhood. Elevated Survivorship. https://metop.io/folders/elevatedsurvivorship.

THINK TANK

HISTORY

Building from the learnings gathered in our 2019 community conversation, Chicago Better Together Breast Cancer Disparities Think Tank, an initiative launched to address the disproportionate impact of breast cancer mortality on Black women in Chicago's South Side and South Suburbs. The Think Tank focuses on four key areas: Cancer Care Continuum, Environmental Justice, Nutrition Justice, and Social-Emotional Well-Being. Members of the Think Tank have joined one of the four Workgroups focused on each of the key areas. Overall, the Think Tank's efforts are geared towards developing a comprehensive, community-informed strategy to reduce breast cancer disparities and improve outcomes for Black women in Chicago.

CANCER CARE CONTINUUM

The Cancer Care Continuum Workgroup aims to improve access to quality care and clinical trials.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

The Environmental Justice Workgroup focuses on addressing pollution and its link to cancer rates.

NUTRITION JUSTICE

The Nutrition Justice Workgroup seeks to reduce nutrition insecurity among those at risk for or diagnosed with breast cancer.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

The Social-Emotional Well-Being Workgroup emphasizes mental and emotional support for patients and their families

THINK TANK ACTIVITIES

A workgroup operating structure is being used to support peer leadership within the diverse membership of the Think Tank. The four issue areas inform the lens through which policy interventions will be developed, but each workgroup has been tasked with identifying the specific goals and activities they will take on.

The Think Tank is serving as a coalition-building opportunity, and leaders have provided tools to support workgroup members in their planning and strategy development. Using a tool called a Workstream Template, each workgroup determined their overarching goal, then broke that goal into smaller goals and objectives. The Workstream Template is a tracking tool for the activities, timeline, team lead, and resources needed to achieve the goals.

PREPARATION

March 15, 2024– April 25, 2024

April 2024 | Chicago Better Together Breast Cancer Disparity Convening

IMPLEMENTATION

April 26, 2024– December 15, 2024

June 2024 | Think Tank Meeting #1

August 2024 | Think Tank Meeting #2

September 2024 | Advocacy Training #1

October 2024 | Think Tank Meeting #3

October 2024 | Advocacy Training #2

November 2024 | Advocacy Training #3

December 2024 | Think Tank Meeting #3

REPORTING AND EVALUATION

December 1, 2024–December 15, 2024

December 2024 | Release of the Pinkprint: Chicago Edition

Advocacy Training

Breast Cancer Think Tank Convening

Think Tank Meeting

Toxic Tour

PARTNER PERSPECTIVES

DEBBIE BOYD-SEALE

"I am an RN. I feel healthcare professionals need to do more to help lessen the breast cancer disparities women of color experience. I am also a breast cancer survivor...This project is needed, and I am honored to be a part of it. I am hopeful the [Think Tank] will make an impact. I want the healthcare facilities to do their part to improve the outcomes of women of color battling breast cancer...I think dialoging with the healthcare providers is critical to making our work impactful."

PARIS THOMAS, PhD

"My journey into this area is both professional and personal. As a public health professional and researcher, I am committed to addressing these disparities. Additionally, my mother's experience with breast cancer and my own family's history of diagnoses and deaths related to this disease have deeply motivated me to make a difference.

Going into this project, I had a solid understanding of breast cancer disparities. However, I have learned much more about the environmental factors contributing to these disparities. This has opened my eyes to the significant role that environmental toxins play in cancer outcomes, which I hadn't fully appreciated before.

I am hopeful that women of color, particularly Black women, will gain access to high-quality care and experience improved longevity away from breast cancer. Looking ahead, I believe our next steps should focus on developing a robust policy agenda that addresses environmental toxins. While we have made strides with bills on screening access and insurance coverage, it is crucial to consider how the environments in which people live impact their health outcomes."

TOMAS DE'MEDICI

When I started on this project my knowledge was broader. I was more aware of the overall trends along racial equity and public health discrepancies for care and outcomes. This project helped me go granular on point source carcinogens, as well as learn more about the robust networks already present at institutional and grassroots level addressing these inequities. I continue to appreciate the opportunity to come into this space with my starting point, learn, and share with this continuity; so that what I offer is community informed and additive.

[I hope] we can continue to build a resilient ecosystem that persists over the coming years. There is so much compelling need and progress already at play, so I am hopeful we can face 2025 and onward in persistently impactful and responsive manners. I am hopeful that our initiative can help keep grassroots progress and memory so we do not have to start from scratch in the future, but instead can take institutional resources and learnings to be immediately deployed. My hope is that we can be both clear enough and effective enough to keep momentum and ensure relevant resource allocation.

I see our next steps as continuing to work with the community to ensure relevance and fit, and then securing institutional resources for implementation and lasting change.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A Strategic Approach for Advancing Equity in Breast Cancer for African American Women on Chicago's Southside—Immediate, Mid-Term, and Long-Term Action Planning

CANCER CARE CONTINUUM

The Chicago Better Together Breast Cancer Disparities Think Tank's Cancer Care Continuum Action Plan represents a commitment to reducing breast cancer mortality rates and improving early detection in Southside communities. This plan couples human-centered grassroots interventions with policy advocacy efforts to promote a transformation in communities and inside healthcare institutions to move the needle on greater access to high-quality breast cancer care for African American women in Chicago.

In the immediate, this action plan will focus on awareness and education. Informed by community advocates and breast cancer survivors, the plan will prioritize a novel tool that will serve as a resource designed to help families document and discuss health histories. Efforts will also center on demystifying the screening process to alleviate fears and misconceptions. Collaborations with mammography centers will identify and address barriers to access, such as long wait times and limited availability of trained staff. Community engagement campaigns, including a "Myth Buster" initiative, will strive to rebuild community trust lost in the healthcare system which has perpetrated harm in African American communities over many decades.

Mid-term strategy shifts toward systemic improvements and policy advocacy. Doubling down on advocacy for full implementation (funding) of the Breast Cancer Excellence in Screening (BEST) Act (PL99-433) is paramount. This effort will involve partnerships with healthcare providers and government agencies to ensure implementation of this legislation which mandates that all Medicaid health plans include American College of Radiology Breast Centers of Imaging Excellence and Academic Commission on Cancer Accredited centers in their networks.

Long term, the plan aspires to drive systemic transformation. Building on the success of earlier interventions and the implementation of the BEST Act, policy advancements achieved under the Best Act could become a national model, leading to a holistic transformation of the healthcare system by prioritizing access to the highest standard of care for all - regardless of income, zip code, or race. The Cancer Care Continuum Action Plan's success will be measured by increased screening rates, reduced healthcare access barriers, and the adoption of equitable policy solutions.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

To address the intersection of environmental risks and breast cancer disparities among survivors on the Southside of Chicago, the Chicago Better Together Breast Cancer Disparities Think Tank's Environmental Justice Action Plan recommends a phased strategy:

The immediate term focuses on raising awareness and building foundational initiatives. A community education campaign will inform residents about breast cancer risks related to environmental hazards, while enhanced mobile mammography programs with clean energy components will increase accessibility to screening while reducing air pollution in communities most affected by environmental exposures. Simultaneously, environmental hazard mapping in target neighborhoods can help identify critical issues. Parallel efforts include forming partnerships with hospitals to expand screening access and piloting small-scale solar installations at community centers. Impact metrics include the number of community members educated, screenings conducted, and hazards mapped.

The key goals for the mid-term plan include creating a data platform linking environmental factors, energy use, and health outcomes, implementing solar projects to benefit breast cancer patients, and drafting policy proposals tying environmental cleanup to cancer prevention. In addition, energy efficiency programs for survivors and zoning advocacy to reduce industrial pollution will help to reduce energy costs and increase clean energy adoption in communities most likely to benefit from environmental justice interventions. Success will be measured by reduced energy costs, increased clean energy adoption, and the number of policy proposals submitted and enacted.

In the long term, the focus shifts to systemic transformation on the Southside. The plan envisions a "Green Health" program combining healthcare navigation with energy services, a comprehensive research study on environmental links to breast cancer, and community resilience hubs offering education and clean energy demonstrations. Expansion to additional communities and city-wide policy adoption are parallel goals for this systemic transformation centering on environmental justice and breast cancer inequities on Chicago's Southside. Metrics for success include reductions in breast cancer mortality rates, improved environmental quality indicators, and the reach and impact of resilience hubs.

NUTRITION JUSTICE

The Nutrition Justice Action Plan represents a transformative commitment to addressing nutrition justice - the idea that everyone should have access to safe, healthy, and affordable food and drinks that promote well-being and prevent disease - on the Southside of Chicago. By combining data-informed strategies with community-driven advocacy and leadership, it seeks to create equitable, sustainable outcomes for those most affected by breast cancer and the lack of access to nutritious foods in their communities.

In the immediate term, the plan focuses on building capacity and raising awareness by solidifying an infrastructure to activate strategies that mitigate nutrition insecurity and advance nutrition justice. This effort will identify gaps in membership, increase the representation of diverse food justice partners, and ensure continued engagement through outreach and resource mapping. Concurrently, work will begin on defining the burden of nutrition insecurity by leveraging diverse data sources, engaging subject matter experts, and conducting analyses to produce a burden snapshot.

The medium-term strategy emphasizes community engagement and hyper-local initiatives. The plan seeks to expand nutrition justice interventions by supporting partnerships among think tank members and aligning their efforts with community-based programs. These efforts will culminate in piloting community-driven solutions in areas with the highest breast cancer mortality rates and limited access to nutritious food. Simultaneously, the workstream aims to influence policy at city, state, and federal levels by conducting thorough analyses, drafting recommendations, and engaging key stakeholders. Success metrics include the number of interventions implemented, pilot outcomes, and the impact of policy recommendations introduced.

In the long term, the focus will expand to systemic transformation and policy advancement. Building on the pilot program's success, localized interventions will scale to additional high-need communities, creating sustainable frameworks for addressing nutrition insecurity. Engagement with decision-makers, strategic use of storytelling, and community mobilization efforts such as town halls and social media campaigns will support this goal. Measures of success will include the number of new policies introduced and adopted, the expansion of interventions to additional areas, and sustained collaboration among stakeholders.

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

The Chicago Better Together Breast Cancer Disparities Think Tank's Social-Emotional Well-Being working group has prioritized education, coalition-building, and advocacy as the overall goals to address the intersection of mental health and breast cancer.

In the immediate term, the workstream activities include the development of a resource guide for women diagnosed with breast cancer to aid in getting mental health support. The workgroup has already identified partners that can distribute the guide and will continue to build relationships with additional points of contact that serve Black women who have recently been diagnosed with breast cancer. The working group will also work towards establishing initial contact with key faith leaders in target communities to introduce the initiative and explore potential collaboration opportunities. This will involve explaining the project's goals, identifying shared values, and discussing potential roles for faith leaders in providing emotional and social support.

The medium-term activities include developing and implementing a "mirror assessment" tool to help patients reflect on their emotional state and identify areas where they may need additional support. This tool will be used to connect patients with appropriate resources and services based on their individual needs. As faith leaders become engaged, the working group will provide support to grow their coalition and resource-sharing. An additional key strategy during this period will be the implementation of education workshops discussing the intersection between mental health, nutrition, and breast cancer, with the potential of collaboration with the Nutrition Justice Workgroup. Success measures include data and recommendations from the "mirror assessment" implementation, cultivation of the faith leader coalition, and implementation and learnings from the education workshops.

Long term, the focus will be on sustaining funding, adding resources to the guide, and growing the existing faith leader coalition. The workgroup will advocate for long-term policy changes and funding mechanisms to ensure sustainable support for education, community-building, and other social-emotional needs of patients. This will involve building broad-based coalitions, engaging with policymakers, and demonstrating the cost-effectiveness of interventions. Long-term measures of success will include the number of initiatives that are funded and the number of policies that are implemented or shifted based on the workgroup's advocacy efforts.

NEXT STEPS

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

The Chicago Better Together Breast Cancer Disparities Think Tank has initiated impactful partnerships, and we are committed to expanding these collaborations in the upcoming year. We will actively seek connections with new partners throughout the Southland region to broaden our reach and impact. By fostering relationships with organizations, institutions, and community leaders, we can leverage a wider range of resources, expertise, and perspectives to address breast cancer disparities more effectively.

WORKGROUP ENGAGEMENT

Following the completion of this year's activities, the Think Tank will conduct a thorough review of the workstream documents developed by each group, with a focus on identifying areas of overlap and synergy. We will continue to provide comprehensive support to each workgroup through capacity-building training initiatives focused on education and advocacy. Additionally, we will collaborate with each workgroup to develop a tailored fundraising strategy to secure the resources necessary to implement their proposed interventions.

COMMUNITY INITIATIVE PILOT

The workstream recommendations represent a comprehensive and multifaceted set of strategies designed to positively impact Black women diagnosed with breast cancer and dismantle the barriers to care that they face at every stage, from screening to care coordination. In collaboration with partners and stakeholders, the Think Tank will carefully select a community area to pilot a comprehensive strategy grounded in the workstream recommendations. This pilot initiative will enable us to rigorously evaluate the impact of our collective strategies on women within that community, and, based on the findings, develop a replicable model that can be implemented in other communities to achieve broader impact. The pilot program will serve as a crucial learning opportunity, allowing us to refine and adapt our strategies based on real-world data and feedback from the community. By implementing and evaluating this pilot initiative, we can ensure that our efforts are evidence-based, effective, and sustainable, ultimately leading to a significant reduction in breast cancer disparities and improved health outcomes for Black women in the Southland region and beyond.

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People for Community Recovery
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Sisters Working It Out
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