



## **BWA Announces Partnership with GE healthy magination to Bring New Technology and Approaches to Breast Cancer Screening in the African American Community – Kimberly Jeffries Leonard, Ph.D.**

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The Black Women's Agenda is pleased to announce its partnership with GE healthy magination to increase breast cancer screening in the African American Community. By building a grassroots movement in underserved communities, BWA and its 16 Collaborating Member Organizations will utilize customized materials and resources to conduct community outreach activities to reduce breast cancer disparities. GE has developed an "All Faces" website to house these materials.

Research shows that while overall, white women are slightly more likely to develop breast cancer than are African-American women, but African-American women are more likely to die of this cancer. In women under 45 years of age, breast cancer is more common in African- American women (American Cancer Society). More prevalent among younger African-American women and harder to treat is "triple-negative breast cancer," an aggressive cancer with a poorer prognosis. Triple negative

breast cancers are estrogen receptor-negative (ER-), progesterone receptor-negative (PR-) and HER2/neu-negative (HER2-) and about 15 to 20 percent of breast cancers are categorized in this manner. And, many BRCA1 and BRCA2 breast cancers also happen to be triple negative. This means that this type of breast cancer's growth is not supported by the hormones estrogen and progesterone, nor by the presence of too many HER2 receptors, which means that the cancer does not respond to hormonal therapy (such as tamoxifen or aromatase inhibitors) or therapies that target HER2 receptors, such as Herceptin. Although the reasons why younger African American women get triple negative breast cancer are not clear right now, one study suggests lifestyle factors might play a role. And higher rates of triple negative tumors may explain, to some degree, the poor prognosis of breast cancers diagnosed in younger African American women (Susan G. Komen for the Cure).

The Black Women's

**BWA**

Agenda, Inc.



**BWA, its 16 Collaborating Organizations, and GE will work collectively to meet the following goals of this partnership:**

- To heighten awareness of the disparity in breast cancer among African American women through education, engagement and empowerment at a grass roots level.
- To encourage the collaborating organizations to make breast cancer a priority within their national and local agendas, and to engage their members by integrating breast cancer into their existing calendar of programs.
- To educate young African American women about the breast cancer disparity and inspire them to become scientists who can help tackle this problem.

**By engaging in targeted community based activities, participants will leave:**

- Understanding that while there is a disparity, there are many ways to systemically attack breast cancer in the African American community.
- With a toolkit of tangible, implementable ideas to engage their membership in this national priority in their local communities.
- With examples of on-going support BWA can provide to help their organization drive this initiative, and maintain momentum throughout the year.
- With a renewed understanding and passion around this critical issue.

BWA and GE will launch this program on March 31, 2012.

**Collaborating Organizations:**

- Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.
- Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
- Lambda Kappa Mu Sorority, Inc.
- National Sorority of Phi Delta Kappa, Inc.
- The Girl Friends, Incorporated
- The Links, Incorporated.
- Chi Eta Phi Sorority, Inc.
- Jack and Jill of America, Inc.
- Iota Phi Lambda Sorority, Inc.
- Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc.
- Auxiliary to the National Medical Association
- National Association of Colored Women's Clubs
- Women's Missionary Council – CME Church
- National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Inc.
- Women's Missionary Society of the African Methodist Episcopal
- National Association of Negro Business & Professional Women's Clubs, Inc.