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## **SUSAN G. KOMEN ANNOUNCES \$27 MILLION HEALTH EQUITY INITIATIVE TO REDUCE BREAST CANCER DEATHS IN AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY**

### **Los Angeles is Named as One of the 10 Cities in the Initiative**

Los Angeles, CA... The Susan G. Komen breast cancer organization gathered philanthropic, civic, medical and business leaders in Washington last week to formally launch a \$27 million, 10-city initiative to reduce breast cancer death rates among African-American women.

“African-American women are almost 40 percent more likely to die of breast cancer than white women in the U.S. and in some cities, that number is as high as 74 percent. That makes this a public health crisis that must be addressed immediately,” said Komen President and CEO Dr. Judith A. Salerno. “We are deeply appreciative of friends and partners who are working with us to do so.”

Salerno thanked the **Fund II Foundation** and its president Robert F. Smith for the \$27 million grant that made the **Komen African-American Health Equity Initiative** possible. “This investment in women’s health will truly save lives,” Salerno said.

Komen’s **African-American Health Equity Initiative** initially targets 10 U.S. cities where mortality rates and late-stage diagnosis of African-American women are highest. The goal: to reduce the mortality gap by 25 percent within five years of beginning work in each city. The Initiative will expand across the country.

The initial targeted cities for the *African-American Health Equity Initiative* are Memphis, Tenn., St. Louis, Mo., Dallas, Los Angeles, Virginia Beach, Va., Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, Washington, D.C., and Philadelphia.

The **African-American Health Equity Initiative** complements the work that Komen and its network of 100 U.S. Affiliates already do to remove barriers to cancer care. Komen and Komen Affiliates support thousands of local programs that provide screenings, treatment assistance, emergency financial aid, medical supplies and living expense for underserved individuals.

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"In California, we have already begun addressing this inequity, not just in Los Angeles, but throughout the state," explained Mark Pilon, Executive Director of Susan G. Komen® Los Angeles County.

"The California Circle of Promise is a statewide initiative addressing breast cancer disparities among African Americans at the system, community, and individual levels. Launched by the seven California affiliates of Susan G. Komen, the initiative serves the unique needs of African American women, 40 and above, who are rarely or never screened for breast cancer and are also low-income, uninsured or recipients of Medi-Cal, in order to provide access to quality breast health care services," he added. "The goal of the initiative is to empower African American women with the knowledge and resources to enter and seamlessly move through a quality, culturally competent and coordinated system of breast health care. In some instances, this means bringing the services directly to the community in the form of a mobile breast cancer screening event and/or grass roots health education programs."

Lewis-Hall stressed the importance of African-American participation in clinical trials. "Why do more of us need to get involved in clinical trials of potential new breast cancer treatments? Because we have so many great scientific opportunities right now and so many questions. These questions will only be answered for us, by us," she said.

The formal launch of the **African-American Health Equity Initiative** came just 24 hours after Komen announced a broader 10-year plan to reduce current U.S. breast cancer deaths by 50 percent in 10 years. Komen's "Bold Goal" strategy focuses on health equity for all medically underserved individuals, and an enhanced focus on research into aggressive and metastatic breast cancer.

The organization has invested more than \$2 billion over 34 years for these programs aimed at uninsured, underinsured, and medically vulnerable populations.

"We will never waver from our commitment to remove barriers of language, geography, economics or culture for *all* people facing this disease. Every woman or man must be able to access and receive high-quality breast health and breast cancer care, and be supported through their treatment and into survivorship," Salerno said.

Click this [link](#) for more on the **Susan G. Komen African-American Health Equity Initiative**.

For more information on Komen's Bold Goal, visit [komen.org](http://komen.org) or Komen's Bold Goal [link](#).

For information on Susan G. Komen Los Angeles County's role in the Circle of Promise, statewide initiative addressing breast healthcare disparities among African American women, please visit: <http://komenlacounty.org/circle-of-promise-2> .

### **About Susan G. Komen®**

Susan G. Komen is the world's largest breast cancer organization, funding more breast cancer research than any other nonprofit outside of the federal government while providing real-time help to those facing the disease. Since its founding in 1982, Komen has funded more than \$920 million in research and provided more than \$2 billion in funding to screening, education, treatment and psychosocial support programs serving millions of people in more than 30 countries worldwide. Komen was founded by Nancy G. Brinker, who promised her sister, Susan G. Komen, that she would end the disease that claimed Suzy's life. Visit [komen.org](http://komen.org) or call 1-877 GO KOMEN. Connect with us on social at [ww5.komen.org/social](http://ww5.komen.org/social).

### **About Fund II Foundation**

Fund II Foundation makes grants to 501(c)(3) public charities in five areas: 1) preservation of the African-American experience, 2) safeguarding human dignity by giving a voice to the voiceless and promoting human rights 3) improving environmental conservation and providing outdoor education that enables people of all ages and backgrounds to enjoy the numerous benefits of the great outdoors 4) facilitating music education, particularly in primary and secondary schools, to nourish both the mind and the soul 5) and sustaining the uniquely

American values of entrepreneurship, empowerment, innovation and security. For more information on Fund II Foundation, visit [www.fund2foundation.org](http://www.fund2foundation.org).

### **About Susan G. Komen Los Angeles County**

Komen Los Angeles County is the local source for funding programs that provide breast health services, breast cancer education and outreach in their LA county service area. Komen Los Angeles donates 75 percent of net funds raised to vital local breast health services, and dedicates the remaining 25 percent to national research to find the cure. Since 1998, Komen LA County has raised over \$11 million for local programs and national research grants. Komen Los Angeles has one clear mission: to save lives and end breast cancer forever by empowering others, ensuring quality care for all and energizing science to find the cures.

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