



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **KOMEN BEGINS DATA COLLECTION IN ANTICIPATION OF FORMING INITIATIVE TO ADDRESS BREAST CANCER DISPARITIES IN AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN**

**July 16, Portland, OR** – In the United States, African-American women die more often and are often diagnosed younger with more aggressive forms of breast cancer than white women. Susan G. Komen Oregon and Southwest Washington would like to try to change this in the Portland-metro area's African American community. As the first step in developing a multi-year initiative to address these breast cancer disparities, Komen has partnered with a team of independent contractors who are actively involved with the Portland-metro area's African American community. The project is being funded, in part, by a grant that Komen received from the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute Community Partnership Program.

The team includes Angela Owusu-Ansah, PhD, professor of Doctoral Studies; D. Bora Harris, MPA, diversity consultant; and Kelvin Hall, MEd, doctoral candidate and community advocate. Each member of the team reflects the community and shares their commitment and passion for the project. They will collect qualitative and quantitative data around demographics, breast cancer screening habits, and barriers to breast cancer screening and treatment, as they look to inform Komen's work in reducing breast cancer mortality in Portland's African American community.

"The disparities are shocking. African American women, in the US, die from breast cancer nearly 40% more than white women. We need to address this!" stated Andrew Asato, CEO of Susan G. Komen Oregon & SW Washington. "We're looking forward to Dr. Owusu-Ansah and her team, whose incredible talents exactly fit our needs, collecting the data that will inform our future efforts, and helping us to create the community advisory group that will guide the formation of a multi-year Komen African American Initiative."

Dr. Owusu-Ansah commented, "We, as independent agents, are thrilled to work in tandem with Komen Oregon & SW Washington, to serve our community with warmth and humility. Reminded of our shared goals, we value the partnership and collaboration towards a better and common future of dignity, respect, and lived lives. We believe we will rediscover the resilience, determination, energy, and infinite diversity of African American women. And together, we will initiate new approaches for progress and health, for humanity as a whole."

Ms. Harris added, "It is refreshing to interact and participate in meaningful dialogue, where the outcome is beneficial to the community as a whole. In addition to health disparities within our

underserved and underrepresented communities, as African American women, we have historically been taught to ‘hush’ concerning many things. This tradition of silence may have negatively impacted several phases of our quality of life in respect to our health.”

Mr. Hall shared, “Fighting cancer is my mission right now. This research and development project seeks to join a shared community, local and globally, to find a cure to support the defeat and elimination of this disease.”

Mr. Asato continued, “Thanks to the support of organizations like Legacy Health, we have a successful breast health education program in the faith-based community, called Worship in Pink. Now, it is time to move beyond education and do what we can to encourage action.”

**Photo Inserted. Suggested caption:**

- “The team collecting data to inform a future multi-year project, spearheaded by Susan G. Komen Oregon & SW Washington, to address breast cancer disparities in Portland’s African American community includes, from left to right: Cindy Fletcher (Komen’s director of programs); Dr. Angela Owusu-Ansah (professor of Doctoral Studies at Concordia University); Bridget Jamieson (Komen’s community programs manager); D. Bora Harris (diversity consultant); and Kelvin Hall (doctoral candidate and community advocate).”

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**About Susan G. Komen Oregon and SW Washington**

In 27 years, the local organization has funneled \$19.7 million into programs that prioritize the importance of improving and building on the quality of life for survivors, emphasize the value of early detection and screenings, as well as financial assistance for access to treatment. Another \$12.4 million has been dedicated to local cutting-edge research. More information is available at [komenoregon.org](http://komenoregon.org).

**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 US government, while providing real-time help to those facing the disease. Nationally, since its founding in 1982, Komen has funded \$2.9 billion in funding to research, screening, education, treatment and psychosocial support programs serving millions of people in more than 30 countries worldwide.



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