



# CANCER SURVIVORSHIP IN AFRICAN AMERICANS

## Who are cancer survivors?

- A cancer survivor is any person with a history of cancer, from the time of diagnosis through the remainder of their life.
- Improvements in cancer treatment, have increased survival rates and have highlighted a need for a new approach to cancer care.
- As of January 2016, there were an estimated 15.5 million cancer survivors in the U.S.

## Why is survivorship important?

- Survivors have to live with the effects of treatment and sometimes fear of the cancer return. Cancer patients, caregivers, and survivors must have the information and support they need to play an active role in decisions that affect treatment and quality of life.
- Cancer diagnosis and treatment may affect your health for the rest of your life. There are many lingering effects of cancer treatment including:
  - Fatigue
  - Incontinence (bowel/bladder)
  - Infertility
  - Learning/memory problems (“chemo-brain”)
  - Lymphedema
  - Neuropathy (tingling/numbness)/pain
  - Sexual dysfunction/erectile dysfunction

## Cancer Survivorship in African Americans

- The National Cancer Institute estimates that there were approximately 1, 211, 690 African American cancer survivors in 2012.
- The most common cancers in African American are breast, lung, and colorectal in females and prostate, lung, and colorectal in males.
- Quality cancer care can significantly increase survivorship and quality of life during and after treatment. However African Americans are more likely to die from most cancers compared to all other racial/ethnic groups.
- The Affordable Care Act (ACA), also called “Obamacare” has helped decrease the burden of cancer for patients and families. But we still have a long way to go.

## Survivorship Care Plans

A Survivorship Care Plan is an important tool for improving your quality of life after cancer. It is a record of your cancer diagnosis, treatment, and recommendations for follow-up care. You should work with your cancer doctors to develop your care plan and share it with your other doctors and healthcare providers. For more information on survivorship care plans visit the websites below:

- **American Cancer Society:** [www.cancer.org/survivorshipcareplans](http://www.cancer.org/survivorshipcareplans)
- **National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship:** <https://www.canceradvocacy.org/resources/planning-your-care/>

## Other Survivorship Resources

- If you are a breast cancer survivor, learn about the Women’s Health and Cancer Rights Act of 1998 (WHCRA) which provides protections for survivors who desire breast reconstruction after a mastectomy for breast cancer.

## Sources

American Cancer Society. (2016). Cancer Facts & Figures for African Americans 2016-2018. Atlanta: American Cancer Society.

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Pratt-Chapman M., Trimble A., Leonard J., Kirch R., Cowens-Alvarado R., Roberts S., Patierno S., & National Cancer Survivorship Resource Center Policy and Advocacy Workgroup. (n.d.). Cancer Survivorship: A Policy Landscape Analysis. Atlanta, GA: American Cancer Society.

## Cancer Survivorship Website

- **American Cancer Society:**  
<https://www.cancer.org/survivorshipcenter>
- **National Cancer Institute Office of Cancer Survivorship:** <https://cancercontrol.cancer.gov/ocs/>
- **National Cancer Survivorship Resource Center:**  
<https://www.cancer.org/health-care-professionals/national-cancer-survivorship-resource-center.html>
- **National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship (NCCS):** <https://www.canceradvocacy.org/>