

Southern Community Cohort Study

THE SOUTHERN COMMUNITY COHORT STUDY NEWSLETTER IS AN ANNUAL PUBLICATION FOR STUDY PARTICIPANTS.

You Are Shaping a Better Future

As a participant in the Southern Community Cohort Study, you are helping to make the future brighter for generations to come!

Doctors and researchers have known for some time that cancer and other serious health problems are more common and more deadly among Southerners, and among African Americans more than other ethnic groups. The SCCS is the largest study ever to focus on understanding the reasons behind these differences. Our ultimate goal is to help find ways to prevent disease, improve treatments and create better lives for everyone.

The study will enroll more than 100,000 people in what's known as a cohort – a group of people about whom a lot of information is gathered, and then the group is followed closely over many years to learn why some develop disease and others do not.

You'll recall that the survey you completed when you enrolled included a lot of information about your diet, your medical history, your lifestyle, and other things. Over time, this information will help uncover clues as to why African Americans and people living in the South have a greater cancer burden than other communities. It is important that you update your contact information so that the study team can continue to follow you over time. **Be sure to call 1 (800) 734-5057 if your address or phone number changes.**

To date, you are one of more than 35,000 people to join this important study. Our success would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of community health centers across the Southeast. We started with 14 centers in six states. Since then, participation has grown so that now enrollment is taking place in 43 centers in

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Welcome

We are excited to bring you another issue of the Southern Community Cohort Study newsletter. It is an honor to update you on the progress of the study and provide you with information to help you lead healthier lives.

If you have suggestions for future issues of this newsletter, we want to hear from you. Call us at 1 (800) 734-5057, toll-free, with ideas for stories or topics you'd like to see covered.

Being able to follow you over time is an important part of the study, so please be sure to call us at 1 (800) 734-5057 if you have moved or if your phone number has changed since you first enrolled.

Please know that your participation in this study is important and greatly appreciated. You are helping to make history, and your contributions will make a difference for your children and grandchildren!

Best wishes,
Dr. William Blot
Principal Investigator
Vanderbilt University

Dr. Margaret Hargreaves
Co-Principal Investigator
Meharry Medical College

Study's Mission Close to New Mom's Heart

Last October, singer-songwriter **Marci Butler Holt** hosted a very special party to honor some very special blessings in her life.

The event with friends and family was a celebration of her 10th wedding anniversary, her son's first birthday and her victory over breast cancer all rolled into one. It also drew attention to and raised money for the Southern Community Cohort Study.

The central purpose of the study – to learn why the burden of cancer is borne so heavily by the African American community – is close to Holt's heart as an African American woman who heard the words "you have cancer" when she was only 38. Two weeks later, during a routine pre-treatment test, she learned that after seven years of trying to conceive, she was carrying her first child.

What should have been a joyful time was also tinged with fear and apprehension.

Holt's team of physicians at Vanderbilt Medical Center carefully organized her cancer treatment around her pregnancy to make sure she received the life-saving treatment she needed but that her developing baby was protected as well.

On Oct. 2, 2003, she and her husband, **Tony**, welcomed **Anthony II** into their family. Holt then turned her attention to trying to give back to the medical and research community that had given her a healthy son and put her own cancer into remission. When she learned about the Southern Community Cohort Study, she decided that was where she wanted to target her efforts.

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A Family Favorite



This recipe is a family favorite of our study team member, **Binni Chadda**. The recipe has been passed down from her grandmother and throughout the years, it has been modified to include spinach so that you get your meat and veggies in one pot. Serve this chicken curry traditionally with steamed rice, or as Binni does, with whole wheat chappaties – Indian flat bread.

Chicken Curry

- 3 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 2 small red onions, peeled and minced
- 2 teaspoons peeled and grated fresh ginger root
- 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric*
- 1½ teaspoons garam masala*
- 1 green Serrano chili pepper, seeded and minced
- 3 small tomatoes, skin-on, pureed or 1 cup canned tomatoes, pureed
- 1½ pounds boneless chicken pieces (breast or thigh meat)
- 1 (or 2) 10 oz package(s) of frozen spinach, thawed and patted dry
- 1 cup water
- ½ to 1 teaspoon salt

(* Turmeric and garam masala are spices that can be found in most supermarkets or Indian food stores.)

In a large skillet over medium heat, heat the oil. Add the onions and cook until lightly browned, 7 to 10 minutes. If the onions begin to stick, add a few tablespoons of water.

Add the ginger, garlic, turmeric, and garam masala and cook, stirring constantly for 1 minute. Add the chili pepper and tomatoes and cook, stirring occasionally, for another 7 minutes.

Add the chicken and cook until the chicken is cooked through, about 10 minutes.

Add the spinach and cook for another 2 minutes. Add the water and, cover, reduce the heat to medium low and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes. Add salt to taste. Serve hot. ○

...Shaping a Better Future

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11 states. Last fall, we added seven new centers, including our first in Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina and Arkansas. Recently, we added 11 new community health centers to the project.

We also have attracted support from private donors to help fund the study, in addition to a large five-year grant from the National Cancer Institute. These private supporters include Caterpillar Inc., the country's largest maker of construction equipment; O'Charleys; and Bank of America. ○

Here's a map and list of the community health centers that have participated in the Southern Community Cohort Study. Those marked with * are centers that are currently enrolling participants.



ALABAMA

- Bayou Area Health Development Board, Inc. (Bayou La Batre)
- * Family Oriented Primary Health Care Clinic (Mobile)
- * Franklin Primary Health Center, Inc. (Mobile)
- * Health Services, Inc. (Montgomery)
- * Quality of Life Health Services, Inc. (Gadsden)
- Rural Health Medical Program, Inc. (Selma)

ARKANSAS

- * East Arkansas Family Health Center, Inc. (West Memphis)
- * Jefferson Comprehensive Care System, Inc. (Pine Bluff)
- * Lee County Cooperative Clinic, Inc. (Marianna)
- * White River Rural Health Center, Inc. (Augusta)

FLORIDA

- Family Medical and Dental Centers (Palatka)
- Jacksonville Community Health Center Inc. (Jacksonville)
- Manatee County Rural Health Services, Inc (Parrish)

GEORGIA

- Albany Area Primary Health Care, Inc. (Albany)
- Curtis V. Cooper Primary Health Care, Inc. (Savannah)
- * Southside Medical Center, Inc. (Atlanta)
- Stewart Webster Rural Health, Inc. (Richland)
- * West End Medical Centers, Inc. (Atlanta)

KENTUCKY

- * Family Health Centers, Inc. (Louisville)
- * Park DuValle Community Health Center (Louisville)

MISSISSIPPI

- Aaron E. Henry Community Health Services Center, Inc. (Clarksdale)
- * Coastal Family Health Center, Inc. (Biloxi)

- Delta Health Center, Inc. (Mound Bayou)
- * Dr. Arenia C. Mallory Community Health Center, Inc. (Lexington)
- * Family Health Care Clinic, Inc. (Pearl)
- * Family Health Center, Inc. (Laurel)
- * G.A. Carmichael Family Health Center (Canton)
- Greater Meridian Health Clinic, Inc. (Meridian)
- Jackson-Hinds Comprehensive Health Center (Jackson)
- Jefferson Comprehensive Health Center, Inc. (Fayette)

NORTH CAROLINA

- * Lincoln Community Health Center, Inc. (Durham)

SOUTH CAROLINA

- Beaufort-Jasper-Hampton Comprehensive Health Services, Inc. (Ridgeland)
- * Eau Claire Cooperative Health Centers (Columbia)
- Family Health Centers, Inc. (Orangeburg)
- * Franklin C. Fetter Family Health Center (Charleston)

TENNESSEE

- Matthew Walker Comprehensive Health Center, Inc. (Nashville)
- * Memphis Health Center, Inc. (Memphis)
- * Rural Health Services Consortium, Inc. (Rogersville)
- * Southside/Dodson Avenue Community Health Centers (Chattanooga)

VIRGINIA

- * Peninsula Institute for Community Health (Newport News)
- * Portsmouth Community Health Center (Portsmouth)
- * Vernon J. Harris East End Community Health Center (Richmond)

WEST VIRGINIA

- * FamilyCare (Scott Depot)

Facts About Diabetes

DIABETES IS...

a life-long disease marked by high levels of sugar in the blood. Diabetes can be caused by too little insulin, resistance to insulin, or both. Insulin is a hormone produced by the pancreas to regulate blood sugar. If you have too little insulin, instead of using sugar for energy, it builds up in your blood. This can damage your blood vessels, leading to serious problems such as blindness, heart disease, and stroke. The effects of high blood sugar can also lead to kidney disease, nerve damage, and limb amputation.

THE KINDS OF DIABETES ARE...

Type 1 diabetes is usually diagnosed in childhood. In people with type 1 diabetes, the pancreas makes little or no insulin, and they must take insulin shots.

Type 2 diabetes usually occurs in adulthood and is far more common, making up 90% or more of all cases of diabetes. The pancreas of type 2 diabetics does not make enough insulin to keep blood sugar levels normal or the body does not respond well to the insulin. Many people with type 2 diabetes do not know they have it, although it is a serious condition. Type 2 diabetes is becoming more common due to the growing number of older Americans, increasing obesity, and failure to exercise. Type 2 diabetes can sometimes be treated with diet and exercise alone. If your diabetes cannot be controlled by lifestyle changes, you may have to take pills or even insulin shots.

Gestational diabetes is high blood sugar that develops during pregnancy in a person who does not have diabetes.

YOU ARE AT INCREASED RISK OF BECOMING DIABETIC IF YOU...

- have a parent, brother, or sister with diabetes
- are overweight and don't exercise
- are older than 45
- are African American, Hispanic American or American Indian
- have had gestational diabetes or delivered a baby weighing more than 9 pounds
- have high blood pressure
- have high blood levels of triglycerides (a type of fat)
- have a high blood cholesterol level

YOU CAN TREAT DIABETES...

usually by simply eating less fat, sugar, and salt. Some people think that diabetics can't eat any of these foods, especially sugar, but moderation is the key. Maintaining a healthy weight helps to manage diabetes. Exercise is important too, even just walking every day. Sometimes diabetics have to take insulin shots or oral medications. Diabetics who are successful in keeping their blood sugars near normal are able to prevent or delay complications like blindness, kidney disease and nerve damage.

YOU CAN FIND OUT IF YOU HAVE DIABETES...

with a simple blood test. Catching it early is important so you can begin treatment and make lifestyle changes to prolong your life. In the United States, 18.2 million adults and children have diabetes. ○

THE SYMPTOMS OF TYPE 2 DIABETES ARE...

- being very thirsty
- losing weight without trying
- urinating often
- having sores or infections that heal slowly
- having dry, itchy skin
- losing the feeling in your feet or having tingling in your feet
- feeling very hungry or tired
- having blurry eyesight

Study Snapshot

More than 35,000 people have been enrolled in the Southern Community Cohort Study so far:

- More than half (59%) are women, 41% are men.
- About half (51%) are in their 40s, about a third (31%) are in their 50s and about one-fifth (18%) in their 60s or 70s.
- About 8 out of every 10 (79%) are African American and almost one in five (18%) are white. Only 3% are of other racial backgrounds.
- More than 9 out of every 10 (91%) went the extra step to give a blood or mouth rinse sample – thank you!
- The median level of education (where half are above and half are below) is high school graduate.
- Nearly half – 46% -- are current smokers.
- A little more than one in five (21%) have diabetes.
- More than half (55%) have high blood pressure.

...New Mom's Heart

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"I want to help the study team learn why cancer is so common and so deadly in my community and I want to help them find ways to change that," Holt said.

To learn more about the study, visit:



Marci, Tonya, and their son Anthony II.

www.southerncommunitystudy.org or call 1 (800) 734-5057. If you'd like to discuss supporting the study with a financial gift, please contact the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center Development Office at (615) 936-0233 or 1 (800) 288-0028. ○

Interviewer Spotlight



Smile Puts Ann Summers On The Road To Success

Please meet *Ann Summers*, a part-time interviewer with the Southern Community Cohort Study at the G.A. Carmichael Family Health Center in Canton, Miss.

Summers, who has been with the study since 2002, has lived in Canton, Miss., all her life. She is close to her mother, two older brothers and her adult daughter. She holds a bachelor's degree in biology-chemistry from Viterbo University in LaCrosse, Wisc., and completed an internship in medical technology at North Mississippi Medical Center in Tupelo, Miss. She has 27 years' experience as a medical technologist at Central Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, Miss., and she is active in her church.

"I love working in a job where one can make an important contribution towards making a difference in people's lives," Summers said about her work with the study.

Cancer has touched Summers in a personal way – a sister-in-law and an uncle died of the disease in the past two years. That motivation, combined with her friendly smile, has contributed to her successful track record. She has enrolled more than 900 people from her hometown into the study.

"I'll always tell them the importance of this study and how cancer touches everyone's lives and what a vital role each one of them can play in helping us fight against cancer in the South," she said. ○

Acknowledgments

The Southern Community Cohort Study newsletter is published yearly for study participants. It is not intended as a replacement for the medical advice of your personal physician; any specific questions about your health should be referred to your doctor.

This newsletter was produced by the Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center (design by *Gwyneth McEuen* and editing by *Cynthia Manley*) and the staff of SCCS. The SCCS is a collaboration between Vanderbilt University, Meharry Medical College, and the International Epidemiology Institute.

To submit story suggestions, to request additional copies of the newsletter, or to report a change in address or telephone number, call toll free at 1 (800) 734-5057.

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