

**Georgia CORE is a small public-private partnership with a big ambition: to provide higher quality, better organized, more cost effective, patient-centered cancer care to all Georgians.** The organization's leaders share a commitment to working collaboratively to improve cancer care and research. Georgia CORE's multi-disciplinary Board of Directors is composed of cancer experts from academic institutions, hospitals and cancer centers in all corners of the state. A Survivorship Advisory Board provides guidance to ensure that programs are patient-centered and that identified needs of survivors are addressed. Georgia CORE serves as the focal point for expanded access to new treatments, promising discoveries, evidence-based care and shared infrastructure. **The result is a unique, collaborative model that traverses competitive boundaries to accomplish collectively what cancer providers and researchers would not be able to achieve independently.**

Funding for Georgia CORE comes from diverse sources including an annual appropriation from the State of Georgia, government grants from state and national agencies, research contracts, philanthropic contributions and individual gifts. The organization adheres to the highest standards of management, governance and financial oversight and maintains low administrative overhead with personnel services provided by Georgia State University. Georgia CORE develops and implements a strategic plan, evaluates and improves organizational performance using multi-faceted approaches, conducts an annual independent audit and maintains a platinum rating for transparency on Guidestar.org.

## **Georgia CORE's Proven Strategies to Advance Cancer Care and Research**

**Problem: Limited research infrastructure and uneven access to clinical trials**

**Solution: Research network expands access to and availability of clinical trials, improves access to high quality cancer care at local level**

Since the creation of Georgia CORE's research network in 2003 the number of members has grown from 7 to 26 while the number of cancer clinical trials offered in Georgia has increased more than eleven-fold from 82 to 960. Members of the network are committed to accelerating the delivery of new and promising treatments to greater numbers of patients, to equitable access to clinical trials for disparate populations and to translating scientific evidence into clinical practice. Today the majority of clinical trials are offered in the Georgia's 10 leading population centers which are geographically distributed. Smaller centers have received tools and training to increase access to Phase II/III studies which further improves care offered in local communities. Streamlined research contracts, utilization of central IRBs, use of online Standard Operating Procedures, training of research staff and centralized study management facilitate the conduct of research. Research coordinated by Georgia CORE through the NCI's Community Oncology Research Program (NCORP) is consistently ranked nationally as among the top five accruers to NRG Oncology studies. Georgia NCORP currently has 100 rostered investigators accruing to 73 trials in 6 community-based cancer centers.

**Problem: Insufficient participation of disparate populations in cancer research**

**Solution: Strong accrual of racial and ethnic minorities and rural residents to clinical trials**

Georgia CORE emphasizes the importance of equitable accrual to clinical trials for racial and ethnic minorities and rural residents who have an increased cancer mortality rate and are less likely to be offered clinical trials. Strategies to increase accrual of disparate populations to clinical trials include increasing awareness of the benefits of research; providing training for healthcare providers; ensuring that trials are offered in cancer centers where minorities and rural populations receive care; tracking and reporting accrual data by race, ethnicity and rurality. National accrual of minorities to clinical trials is estimated to be less than 5% while studies sponsored by Georgia CORE accrue in excess of 25% racial and ethnic minorities. As a result, a more Georgians have access to promising treatments close to home and data on the efficacy of new treatments is based on results from diverse populations.

**Problem: Limited information on cancer care, clinical trials and survivorship designed to meet the needs and perspectives of patients and caregivers**

**Solution: Web portal of comprehensive information including cancer guidelines, clinical trials, profiles of oncologists and survivorship resources available 24/7 on GeorgiaCancerInfo.org**

Five years ago Georgia CORE created GeorgiaCancerInfo.org as the only comprehensive, searchable source of information about cancer care in Georgia -- including listings of over 960 clinical trials, profiles of more than 830 oncologists and 390 cancer centers, information on national standards and guidelines and resources for survivors and caregivers. The web portal is used by over 39,000 patients, providers, caregivers and survivors annually. Georgia CORE has a data-sharing agreement with the NCI and routinely receives downloads of nationally registered studies which are then customized for use on GeorgiaCancerInfo.org. Patients and providers rely on the online center to obtain the latest information on clinical trials based on cancer type, phase, provider and location. There is no other known database that integrates this information in a searchable, mobile-optimized format. The website is accredited by Health-on-the-Net.

**Problem: Growth in number of cancer survivors -- driven by greater effectiveness of cancer treatment and calls for multi-disciplinary approaches to care**

**Solution: Evidence-based program to improve quality of care and quality of life for survivors**

Georgia CORE is committed to improving both quality of care for cancer patients and quality of life for survivors – 410,740 cancer survivors reside in Georgia. In order to understand the physical, psychosocial, practical and spiritual needs of this population, Georgia CORE coordinated the first statewide survivors' needs assessment survey which was completed by 950 survivors in 76 counties treated in 29 centers – 72% of the hospitals accredited by the Commission on Cancer. This data informed the development of survivorship goals of the Cancer Control Plan in order to address unmet needs. The Cancer Survivorship Connection web portal (GeorgiaCancerInfo.org/Survivorship) contains evidence-based survivorship resources. Currently a demonstration project is underway to provide survivorship care plan tools on mobile devices. Georgia CORE received a cancer survivorship care award from the Patient Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) and is active in disseminating research and findings at national meetings and conferences. In 2016, the organization presented results of a statewide integrative oncology program at a national conference and hosted a statewide cancer survivorship conference.

**Problem : Cancer experts from academic institutions, community cancer centers, hospitals and public health have few collaborative opportunities to improve cancer outcomes**

**Solution: Statewide public-private partnership expands research among disparate organizations, provides opportunity for collective planning and knowledge transfer**

Approximately 80% of cancer care in Georgia is provided in community settings spanning the continuum from primary to specialty care. Promising new treatments are typically conceived and tested in a select group of academic centers often by-passing community research centers. These centers are often accredited by the Commission on Cancer and have proven experience in conducted clinical trials but lack NCI-funded infrastructure which makes delivering new and promising treatments both a complex undertaking and a significant expense. By working together, investigators from academic institutions, community cancer centers and public health have designed a system that supports the delivery of statewide cancer clinical trials in a variety of clinical settings. These leaders are actively engaged in the development of a state cancer plan for prevention and detection of cancer, implementation of a statewide survey of survivorship needs and conduct of investigator-initiated, government and industry sponsored clinical trials. Results of Georgia CORE's research and accomplishments are published in national peer reviewed journals including the *Annals of Surgical Oncology*, *Clinical Breast Cancer*, *Journal of Cancer Survivorship*, *Journal of Community and Supportive Oncology*, *Journal of Oncology Practice* and *Population Health Management*.

**Problem: Limited use of promising and evidence-based approaches to cancer screening and prevention**

**Solution: Prevention program expands evidence-based screening, incorporates genomic risk assessment *prior* to cancer diagnosis**

In partnership with public health, academic institutions and Federally Qualified Health Centers, Georgia CORE facilitates genomic risk assessment for Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer; to date over 18,000 women, 49% of whom are racial or ethnic minorities, have been screened. BreastCancerGeneScreen.org, Georgia CORE's website which houses the B-RST™ screening tool for Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer (HBOC), is recommended by the US Preventive Services Task Force and collects risk assessment data. Genetic counseling and testing are available for women who screen positive and at no cost for those without insurance through partnerships with the Georgia Departments of Public Health and Community Health. Sales of Georgia's Breast Cancer License Tag (\$22 from each tag purchased or renewed) generates funding for cancer screening and treatment. Through a contract with the state, Georgia CORE has awarded over \$3 million in grants to community organizations and public health programs offering culturally appropriate education and outreach, mammograms, biopsies and cancer treatment to over 157,203 underinsured and underserved women many of whom are minorities or rural residents.

**More information is available on Georgia CORE at:**

[www.GeorgiaCORE.org](http://www.GeorgiaCORE.org)

[www.GeorgiaCancerInfo.org](http://www.GeorgiaCancerInfo.org)

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