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## **KOMEN ORANGE COUNTY AFFILIATE RELEASES COMMUNITY BREAST CANCER ASSESSMENT**

### *UCI Data Project Reveals Socioeconomic Disparities in Breast Health Care*

COSTA MESA, Calif., February 11, 2009—Insufficient health insurance and lower socioeconomic status are primarily responsible for an increased risk of mortality among women with breast cancer in Orange County, according to a data analysis project conducted by the Orange County Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, the premier nonprofit organization dedicated to saving lives and ending breast cancer forever.

The Komen Orange County Affiliate, under the guidance of a Community Advisory Group, partnered with researchers from the University of California, Irvine's Department of Epidemiology to examine differences in breast cancer rates among local women from diverse demographic groups. The project, which seeks to identify unmet breast health to inform decision-making concerning local breast cancer service provision, revealed disparities in access to breast health care, particularly among socio-economically disadvantaged women and those from minority communities.

"Understanding the marked disparities in breast health care that exist in our community is critical to Komen's efforts to close the gap in breast cancer screening and treatment by reaching across socioeconomic, language and cultural barriers to provide breast health education and services to those most at risk," said Lisa Wolter, executive director of the Orange County Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure. "The study gives us a better understanding of breast cancer specifically in Orange County and allows us to target our work to address local unmet needs, as we all strive to end breast cancer forever."

The Komen Orange County Affiliate recently released the complete study, which was conducted over 18 months, in advance of its forthcoming 2009 Komen Breast Health Symposium, scheduled for Saturday, March 21 at the Anaheim Marriott in Anaheim, Calif. This annual event provides comprehensive and innovative breast health education on a wide range of topics in support of Orange County's diverse community.

Using data collected by the California Cancer Registry from 1990 to 2004, researchers examined breast cancer diagnosis and mortality rates among women identified by age, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and other demographic factors. The study was divided into four monographs: Disparities in Late-Stage Diagnosis; Disparities in Breast Cancer Mortality; Young Women with Breast Cancer in Orange County and California; and Planning for the Future of Breast Cancer in Orange County.

"Identifying the breast health needs in Orange County is the first step, and unless we address these issues, we believe there will be a 30 percent increase in demand for breast cancer screening services by 2020, including 850,000 mammograms at a cost of \$213 million," said Dr. Hoda



Anton-Culver, chair of the department of epidemiology at UCI and the study's lead researcher. Anton-Culver will be delivering the keynote address at the Breast Health Symposium.

Key findings include:

- The incidence of late-stage breast cancer diagnoses among Orange County women remained stable over the past 15 years.
- Although breast cancer prevalence among young women accounts for only 6 to 7 percent of total breast cancer, it is still the leading cancer diagnosed and leading cause of cancer death among women 20 to 39 years of age.
- Among all breast cancer patients, the probability of a late stage diagnosis is highest among women of Hawaiian and other Pacific Island descent. Hispanic women of Mexican descent are 50 percent more likely to be diagnosed at a later stage than non-Hispanic white women.
- African-American women have a significantly increased chance of being diagnosed at a late stage. The problem appears to be worsening and greatest for women younger than 55 years.
- The probability of a late-stage diagnosis is 78 percent higher for women without health insurance and 37 percent higher for those with Medicaid.

“The UCI Data Project highlights the importance of culturally-competent breast health education and treatment services that organizations like Susan G. Komen for the Cure and its community partners are working to provide to all women, and particularly to the underserved and uninsured in our community,” added Anton-Culver.

Those interested in learning more about the UCI Data Project findings and a variety of topics concerning breast health care are encouraged to attend. For more information on the symposium and to download fact sheets and the monographs from the data project, visit [www.komenoc.org](http://www.komenoc.org) or call 714-957-9157.

#### **ABOUT SUSAN G. KOMEN FOR THE CURE®**

Nancy G. Brinker promised her dying sister, Susan G. Komen, she would do everything in her power to end breast cancer forever. In 1982, that promise became Susan G. Komen for the Cure and launched the global breast cancer movement. Today, Komen for the Cure is the world's largest grassroots network of breast cancer survivors and activists fighting to save lives, empower people, ensure quality care for all and energize science to find the cures. Through events like the Komen Race for the Cure, nearly \$1 billion has been invested to fulfill that promise, making Komen for the Cure the world's largest source of nonprofit funds dedicated to fighting breast cancer.

For more information on the Orange County Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure, please visit [www.komenoc.org](http://www.komenoc.org) or call 714-957-9157.

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