

We would like to share with you these warm and important thoughts concerning our recent partnership with the GW Cancer Institute...written by one of our dedicated, community-minded Board Members, Donald R. Rogers.

October 5, 2009

DC Symposium on Cancer Survivorship - Searching for Better Outcomes


There are 13 million cancer survivors in the United States and that number continues to grow year after year. That's the good news. The bad news is that there will be 1.4 million new cancer diagnoses in the U.S. this year, 2,600 will be Washingtonians. We are all very aware of the need for cancer research to find a cure, better treatment, earlier diagnosis and prevention. We have not, however, given enough attention to the issues faced by cancer survivors. As one prominent doctor told me "the two worst days in a cancer patients' lives are the day they receive their cancer diagnosis and the day they complete treatment and are told 'good luck' by their supervising physician". That "good luck" spells out the uncertainty that lies ahead for many cancer survivors - and forecasts their coming struggle with physical and psychosocial issues - as well as more practical economic concerns. Will their insurance cover their future costs - will their employers keep jobs open and be understanding with regard to any workplace compromises survivors may have to make to assure recovery? These and many other topics - including outcome disparities in the Washington area - will be the subject of a unique day-long Cancer Survivorship Symposium sponsored by George Washington University's Cancer Institute and the EagleBank Foundation on October 15, 2009.

Washington is more than the capital of this great nation. It is also, unfortunately, home to some of the most disappointing cancer mortality statistics in the United States. And, disparities in access to health care here are leading to devastating outcomes for those in the poorest and most medically underserved wards in the city. In fact, in Washington, D.C., the cancer mortality rate is more than 7% higher than the national average (according to DC's Department of Health 2005 Epidemiology Report). Many of us - both from the cancer research and advocacy worlds believe we can and must do more here in Washington and elsewhere to improve not only the numbers on mortality and incidents of occurrence, but also to understand the concerns and challenges of cancer survivors.

Cancer research has shown that prevention, early diagnosis and consistent follow-up care are crucial to saving lives. With a disproportionate number of cancer deaths in Washington occurring in Wards 4, 5 and 7, the George Washington Cancer Institute and other local hospitals and medical centers have launched initiatives to reach citizens in these neighborhoods. GW's efforts have centered on free digital-rectal screening tests in Safeways and on mobile mammography vans. These programs bring medical professionals where they are needed - and also educate families on the importance of getting tested.



www.eaglebankcorp.com



But, as enterprising as these efforts are, they are not sufficient on their own. The upcoming cancer symposium, which is open to all local cancer survivors, will gather together leading cancer researchers, clinicians and cancer advocates to discuss issues - including disparities in outcome - that affect cancer survivors here. Indeed, in hopes of broadening our understanding of what can be done to improve cancer care access locally, two of Lance Armstrong's Livestrong Survivorship Centers of Excellence have agreed to participate and discuss strides they have made in addressing the needs of minority and underserved cancer survivors.

Cancer strikes all Americans, regardless of race, gender, or economic background. Cancer does not discriminate. My involvement with the war on cancer came as a result of my work with the EagleBank Foundation. In helping raise research money to fight cancer, I saw, firsthand, how cancer survivorship is frequently as difficult to manage as is finding the best cancer treatment. And, those who care for cancer survivors are only now beginning to fully appreciate the many concerns - and support-system requirements- that can make a significant, positive difference for survivors and for their families.

For this reason, findings from the symposium will be made available to medical centers across the country. And we plan to make this symposium an annual event. It is only with renewed focus, determination and commitment that we can lower the cancer mortality statistics and truly improve the quality of life for cancer survivors. Working together, this is a goal that we can accomplish - the gift of a good and productive life for so many of our citizens.

Donald R. Rogers
Chairman of EagleBank Foundation
Director of Eagle Bancorp, Inc. and EagleBank
Founding Partner of Shulman Rogers

Thank you, Don!