



CRUCIAL CATCH

INTERCEPT CANCER



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American Cancer Society and The Carolina Panthers Award \$100,000 Grant to Gaston Family Health Services to Help Reduce Breast Cancer Disparities

Charlotte, NC - (August 7, 2018) The American Cancer Society (ACS), in partnership with the Carolina Panthers, awarded the local NFL Breast Health Equity CHANGE grant to Gaston Family Health Services to address disparities in breast cancer mortality by providing access to breast cancer screening, follow-up of abnormal mammograms and timely access to specialty care if needed. The grant funding was made possible through ACS's partnership with the NFL and the league's Crucial Catch campaign.

The grants are the latest in ACS's Community Health Advocates implementing Nationwide Grants for Empowerment and Equity (CHANGE) program, which provides funding opportunities as part of ACS's commitment to reduce disparities in cancer mortality. Gaston Family Health Services will receive \$100,000 over two years. The grants are focused primarily on African American communities, but also target other underserved populations.

Breast cancer mortality has steadily declined over the last four decades, largely due to improvements in early detection and treatment. However, not all women have benefited equally from this progress. A faster drop among white women has widened the mortality gap between white and black women. Despite similar rates of disease and screening rates, breast cancer death rates in 2015 were 39 percent higher for black women than white women in the nation as a whole and up to 60 percent higher in some states. Access to timely follow-up and high-quality treatment are key drivers of these disparities, especially in underserved communities. Differences in stage of cancer diagnosis, tumor characteristics, obesity and other comorbidities are also contributing factors.

"We are fortunate to have a strong and successful partnership with the National Football League on this campaign to draw attention to early detection and the importance of breast cancer screening exams for underserved women," says Megan Wessel, cancer control vice president, American Cancer Society.

“This grant will get us one step closer to reducing disparities and promoting health equity across the Carolinas.”

“Gaston Family Health Services is delighted to be chosen for the NFL Breast Health Equity grant,” says Lavondia Alexander, director of quality and clinical informatics. “The poor and medically underserved have challenges receiving recommended cancer screenings. As such, they are more likely to be diagnosed with late stage cancer that could have been treated if diagnosed earlier. As a safety net provider for the medically underserved, Gaston Family Health Services in partnership with community healthcare providers, the NFL and American Cancer Society will use this grant to create and support processes to increase access and treatment for breast cancer.”

The American Cancer Society is committed to saving lives and addressing the unequal burden for cancer. The CHANGE grant program was implemented in 2011. Since the inception, the NFL, Carolina Panthers, and ACS have partnered to support the efforts of the community grants. “We all know the best defense is a good offense, and the Carolina Panthers are pleased to partner with the American Cancer Society to provide important funding for cancer prevention and education efforts in the Carolinas through Crucial Catch,” said Riley Fields, Carolina Panthers director of community relations. “Most importantly, the community grant being awarded to Gaston Family Health Services servicing Catawba, Davidson, Forsyth, Gaston, Iredell, and Lincoln counties will focus on underinsured and uninsured individuals receiving lifesaving preventative breast cancer screenings.”

Since 2009, the NFL’s *Crucial Catch* has raised more than \$18 million in support of ACS. Funding raised since 2012 has supported ACS’s CHANGE program and has been invested in underserved communities to increase cancer education and awareness and promote life-saving screening tests. To date, health system grantees have reached more than 632,000 individuals with education, patient reminders and navigation to screening, and contributed to 138,000 breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screenings. These new grants will improve timely access to follow up care along with a continued focus on access to high-quality breast cancer screening for underserved women.

Photo Caption: (from left) “Riley Fields, Carolina Panthers director of community relations, Lavondia Alexander, Gaston Family Health Services director of quality and clinical informatics, Robert Spencer Gaston Family Health Services CEO and Lisa Scott, American Cancer Society health systems manager, primary care systems with the Breast Health Equity CHANGE grant check for \$100,000 presented by the NFL Carolina Panthers and the American Cancer Society.”

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About The American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a global grassroots force of 1.5 million volunteers dedicated to saving lives, celebrating lives, and leading the fight for a world without cancer. From breakthrough research, to free lodging near treatment, a 24/7/365 live helpline, free rides to treatment, and convening powerful activists to create awareness and impact, the Society is attacking cancer from every angle. For more information go to www.cancer.org

About Crucial Catch

The NFL, its clubs, the NFL Players Association and the American Cancer Society are committed to the fight against cancer. Crucial Catch expands the impact of the NFL’s work around breast cancer to address multiple

types of cancer through prevention, early detection, and timely access to follow-up care as needed. Since 2009, the first year of the NFL's Crucial Catch campaign, the league's work has raised more than \$18 million for the American Cancer Society. Money raised through Crucial Catch supports the American Society's Community Health Advocates implementing Nationwide Grants for Empowerment and Equity (CHANGE) program, which promotes health equity and addresses cancer-related disparities. Visit nfl.com/crucialcatch to learn more and get involved.