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For Immediate Release

Cancer Support Community Central Ohio Receives Funding from the CareSource Foundation

Support will address health care disparities for low-income and Black cancer survivors.

COLUMBUS, Ohio (July 31, 2023) – Cancer Support Community Central Ohio is pleased to announce that it has received funding in the amount of \$15,000 from the CareSource Foundation to support its health equity program and services.

The health equity program focuses on reducing barriers to cancer care, and providing appropriate support, education, and wrap-around care coordination services for individuals impacted by cancer who are disproportionately affected by health disparities. Specifically, the project focuses on the Black community and individuals who are affected by poverty. Support from generous funders like CareSource allow Cancer Support Community Central Ohio to provide all its services at no cost.

“At CareSource our mission is to make a lasting difference in our members’ lives. We are committed to working with partners like Cancer Support Community Central Ohio and other organizations across the country to support our members, focusing on person-centered care while addressing health care disparities,” said Beejadi Mukunda, M.D., Chief Medical Officer for CareSource Ohio “Our relationship with Cancer Support Community Central Ohio will help shape the future of improving low-income and Black cancer-survivor members’ quality of life by enhancing resources available to them where they live”.

While cancer can affect anyone, certain populations are more at risk and have more difficulty handling cancer’s effects. Cancer health disparities – such as higher cancer death rates, less frequent use of proven screening tests, and higher rates of advanced cancer diagnoses— are frequently seen in people from low socio-economic groups, certain racial and ethnic populations, and those who live in geographically isolated areas.

One component of Cancer Support Community’s health equity initiative is Empower, an oncology-focused care coordination program that addresses health and health care disparities for low-income cancer patients and survivors who are uninsured or Medicaid-recipients.

“Lack of health insurance or not having adequate insurance can be a major obstacle for someone facing a cancer diagnosis,” offered Juanetta Burch, Cancer Support Community’s Certified Community Health Worker. “Without insurance to help with expenses, people may skip treatments and ration or stop taking medications that are needed.”

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“One of the services we provide is helping people advocate for themselves so they can receive the benefits that are available from their insurance companies. We also help people get signed up for Medicaid,” Burch explained. Other services include connecting the patient with resources in the community for housing, transportation, and food assistance. Financial assistance also is available from Cancer Support Community for those who qualify.

Another aspect of Cancer Support Community's health equity program involves tailored programming for members of the Black community. “We are seeking input from members of the Black community who are cancer survivors about the types of support services they would like to receive,” noted Angie Santangelo, LISW-S, Cancer Support Community's Clinical Program Director. Cancer survivors and caregivers who are interested in sharing their voices can do so by going to [CancerExperienceRegistry.org/Join/CSCCentralOhio](https://www.cancerexperienceregistry.org/Join/CSCCentralOhio) to complete a survey.

“Based on feedback we have already received, we have created a series of programs called Girlfriends' Circle,” Santangelo said. “This includes a breast cancer support group for Black women, a healthy cooking and nutrition program, and a ZipHop class for exercise that is held at First Church.”

“We appreciate the support from the CareSource Foundation,” continued Santangelo. “It will help us serve more people impacted by cancer so they can ultimately improve their overall health and quality of life.”

About Cancer Support Community Central Ohio

The mission of Cancer Support Community Central Ohio is ***to uplift and strengthen people impacted by cancer by providing support, fostering compassionate communities, and breaking down barriers to care.*** Cancer Support Community programs serve all people living with any type or stage of cancer, from diagnosis through survivorship. We play a vital role in the lives of individuals, families, and caregivers as they navigate the cancer experience by providing support, education, and a community of support.

All programs are facilitated by licensed and credentialed facilitators and instructors, are proven to be effective by solid evidence, and are provided without any time limitation on participation. There is never a fee to attend—all programs and services are provided at ***no cost*** to ensure that we do not increase the financial burden that often accompanies the cost of cancer care.

About CareSource

CareSource is a nonprofit, nationally recognized managed care organization with over 2.3 million members. Headquartered in Dayton, Ohio, since its founding in 1989, CareSource administers one of the largest Medicaid managed care plans in the U.S. The organization offers health insurance, including Medicaid, Health Insurance Marketplace and Medicare products. As a mission-driven organization, CareSource is transforming health care with innovative programs that address the social determinants of health, health equity, prevention, and access to care.

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