

Sister Network – Meharry Women’s Center Breast Cancer Focus Groups

While several studies confirm family history as a risk factor risk for breast cancer, few, to our knowledge, have attempted to better understand how being closely related to a person with cancer impacts lifestyle choices, preventive health behaviors, personal knowledge of hereditary cancer risk and quality of life. The Sister’s Network Nashville supports hundreds of local African American women who have survived cancer. The purpose of this proposal is to become more intentional in the ways in which close family members are supported and educated. While one might assume that close relatives will have high levels of awareness related to breast cancer, we expect our focus group discussions to reveal something novel related to the extent to which that awareness influences healthy lifestyle choices and/or preventive behaviors. Thus, our project will focus on cancer-free African-American women whose first-degree family member (*mother, daughter, sister*) has been diagnosed with breast cancer. Specifically, there are four questions we want to present to better understand the experiences of these women:

- Are they aware of their higher than average risk of breast cancer?
- Do they know the risk factors: age, environment, genes, breast density?
- Do they know current mammography screening guidelines?
- How has this knowledge changed lifestyle choices or preventive health behaviors?

For more information or to sign up call 615.327.6531 or email sistersnetwork-cwhr@mmc.edu