

Screening for Individuals at Risk for Hereditary Breast and Ovarian Cancer: A Statewide Initiative, Georgia, 2012–2020

Yue Guan, PhD, ScM, CGC¹; Julia K. Veitinger, BS²; Alice S. Kerber, MN, APRN³; Yuan Liu, PhD⁴; Lynn M. Durham, EdD³; Diane Durrence, APRN, MSN, MPH⁵; Alissa K. Berzen, MPH⁵; Janet Y. Shin, MPH⁵; Cindy Snyder, DNP, ACGN, FNP-C, CBCN³; Cecelia A. Bellcross, PhD, CGC⁶; Sheryl G. A. Gabram-Mendola, MD, MBA³

¹Department of Behavioral, Social, and Health Education Sciences, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University; ²Hubert Department of Global Health, Rollins School of Public Health, Emory University; ³Georgia Center for Oncology Research and Education; ⁴Department of Biostatistics and Bioinformatics, Rollins School of Public Health & Winship Cancer Institute, Emory University; ⁵Georgia Department of Public Health; ⁶Department of Human Genetics, Emory University School of Medicine

Georgia initiated a statewide family history screening program to detect hereditary breast and ovarian cancer. From January 1, 2012, to December 31, 2020, 81 of the 187 public health clinics in Georgia adopted this screening program. It has reached women in 75 out of 159 (47%) counties in Georgia, with 69 of these counties recognized as medically underserved areas (MUA). To date, 29,090 individuals have been screened, with 16,679 (57.3%) self-identifying as members of a racial/ethnic minority. Of those screened, 4% (1,172 out of 29,090) were identified as high-risk. Over half of this high-risk group pursued genetic consultation (793 out of 1,172; 67.7%) and genetic testing (416 out of 589; 70.6%). Black and Hispanic women showed higher genetic consultation uptake rates compared to White women. Public health settings serving racial minorities are ideally positioned to address disparities in access to genetic services. Nevertheless, the program's reach remains limited. The current strategy to promote follow-up cancer screening is suboptimal, focusing exclusively on women identified with a high genetic risk. There is a need to adapt the program to amplify its sustainable reach and enhance communication suitability and effectiveness, particularly in rural Georgia areas with sizable ethnic minority populations.