# New York State Cancer Consortium Action Team Implementation Projects

**2026**

## Addressing cancer burden in communities across New York State

### Overview

In collaboration with the New York State (NYS) Cancer Consortium, the NYS Department of Health funded nine organizations to implement projects that support the priorities of the New York State Cancer Consortium Action Teams and the New York State Comprehensive Cancer Control Plan from March 1, 2026 through June 29, 2026.

### Action Team Projects

#### Skin Cancer Action Team

- Sun Safeguards: A Pilot Lifeguard Sun Safety Education and Policy Initiative

#### Lung Cancer Action Team

- June 2026 Lung Cancer Awareness Outreach Initiative

#### Colorectal Cancer (CRC) Action Team

- Increasing Completion of At-Home Stool Tests Among First Time Testers

#### Survivorship Action Team

- Enhancing Rural Survivorship Care: Patient Perspectives on Navigating Healthcare Needs in Rural Communities
- The Patient Voice: Living With and Beyond Cancer in Rural Communities ECHO

#### Healthy Eating Active Living (HEAL) Action Team

- The Healing Table Event: Developing and Piloting an Educational Event for Food Insecure Cancer Patients
- Moving For Life Dance Exercise for New York Cancer Patients and Survivors
- HEALing Through Aquatic Wellness Program
- Wellness in the Schools Parent Workshop

### At a Glance

**480** Lifeguards and aquatic staff trained about sun safety

**462** Individuals educated about lung cancer

**300** Patients reminded to complete ordered stool tests

**14** Cancer survivors and caregivers engaged in survivorship forum

**108** Healthcare providers educated about cancer survivorship

**39** Cancer patients and families educated about nutrition

**59** Cancer patients educated about physical activity

**20** Parents and guardians educated about healthy meals

*We acknowledge the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for its support of the New York staff, and the printing and distribution of the monograph under cooperative agreement CDC-RFA-DP22-2202/ NU58DP007218 awarded to Health Research, Inc.. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of CDC.*

# Sun Safeguards: A Pilot Lifeguard Sun Safety Education and Policy Initiative




## Project Overview

Columbia University provided sun safety trainings to lifeguards and aquatic staff at public beaches and recreation sites in the Towns of Islip and Babylon to increase lifeguard knowledge of skin cancer risk factors and sun-protective behaviors; establish municipal sun safety policies; and create a replicable training model to be used by municipalities statewide.

## Main Activities

- **Sun Safety Trainings:** Delivered 10 virtual sun safety trainings and one in-person training from May through June 2026 for a total of 480 lifeguards and aquatic staff in the Towns of Islip and Babylon on Long Island. The trainings provided information about ultraviolet (UV) exposure, skin cancer risk for outdoor workers, sunscreen use and reapplication, use of sun-protective clothing, and early detection. Pre-and-post training surveys were used to inform the content of the trainings and measure success. A training video was developed for ongoing use.
- **Sun Safety Supports & Visual Reminders:** Distributed sun safety supplies including gallon pump sunscreen for beach and pool sites, portable mini sunscreens that can attach to keychains, waterproof posters and flyers for lifeguard shacks, sun-protective shirts, and UV-protective sunglasses.
- **Meetings with Decision Makers:** Met with senior lifeguards, parks and recreation department staff, and union partners about including sun safety training in the standard lifeguard orientations and implementing the sun safety training video within the employee portal to be used in future years.

## Impact

- **Positive Feedback:** Post-training survey responses from 54 participants showed that 93% of participants rated the training as clear and easy to understand, and 85% found it relevant to their actual work environment.
- **Sustainability:** Both the Islip and Babylon Parks and Recreation Departments expressed desire to institutionalize this training into their annual employee onboarding. Plans are also underway to host the training video in online employee portals.
- **Community Awareness:** A local newspaper picked up the story and is writing a piece on sun safety for the area's recreational outdoor workers.

## Opportunities

- **Replicable Training Model:** Future goals include refining survey materials, developing a replicable implementation toolkit, and sharing the model with other municipalities to treat sun safety as a standard element of occupational job readiness.

### Testimonial

*"Babylon and Islip's Parks and Recreation Department expressed genuine enthusiasm throughout the process and have indicated they would like to make sun safety training a regular part of their seasonal programming."*

- Columbia University Staff

# June 2026 Lung Cancer Awareness Outreach Initiative




## Project Overview

The NYC Health + Hospitals Lung Cancer Screening Program (LCSP) implemented a systemwide Lung Cancer Awareness Outreach Initiative throughout New York City (NYC) to raise awareness of lung cancer screening, promote early detection, reduce health disparities, and expand access to lifesaving screening services for New Yorkers at risk for lung cancer.

## Main Activities

- **Outreach Activities:** Conducted lung cancer awareness outreach activities in June 2026 at all 10 NYC Health + Hospitals acute care facilities and 12 community- and clinic-based events throughout NYC reaching 462 individuals. Activities consisted of community presentations, educational exhibits, provider engagement, and multilingual materials at hospitals, clinics, senior centers, libraries, and adult education programs.
- **White Flags Campaign:** Displayed 1,500 custom Lung Cancer Screening Program white flags across NYC Health + Hospitals acute care facilities, creating highly visible awareness installations that encouraged conversations about lung cancer prevention, screening, and early detection.
- **Lung Cancer Screening Navigation:** Paired the white flag displays with educational outreach activities led by Lung Cancer Screening Clinical Navigators that offered one-on-one counseling and provided personalized guidance, eligibility assessments, and direct scheduling assistance.

## Impact

- **Community-Based Outreach Works:** The initiative reached 462 individuals, identified 135 potentially eligible participants for lung cancer screening, and resulted in 28 lung cancer screening appointments.
- **Clinical Navigators Are Essential:** Participants highly valued the opportunity to ask questions and receive personalized guidance regarding lung cancer risk factors, screening eligibility, and next steps.
- **Provider Engagement Matters:** Several facilities reported significant benefits from educating providers regarding current lung cancer screening guidelines, eligibility criteria, and referral workflows.
- **Education + Conversation = Impact:** The most successful events combined formal presentations, printed educational materials, one-on-one navigator discussions, and opportunities for immediate scheduling.

## Opportunities

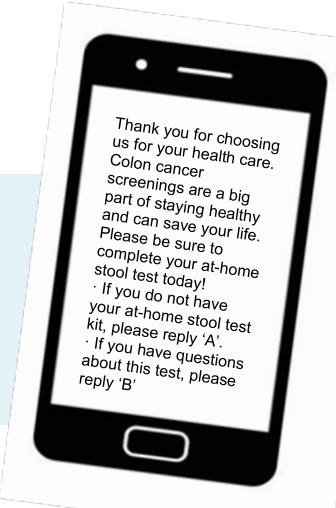
- **Follow-Up Remains Critical:** While awareness and interest were high, additional follow-up strategies will be needed to convert interest into completed lung cancer screenings.

## Testimonial

*"Participating facilities reported strong community engagement, increased provider awareness of screening guidelines and referral pathways, and high levels of interest in personalized discussions with Clinical Navigators."*

- NYC Health + Hospitals Staff

# Increasing Completion of At-Home Stool Tests Among First Time Testers




## Project Overview

The Community Healthcare Network conducted outreach to patients via text and phone calls, using a script from the National Colorectal Cancer Screening Roundtable, to increase screening completion rates among patients with no history of prior stool test completion.

## Main Activities

- **Patient Identification:** Identified patients from 11 of the Community Healthcare Network's (CHN) federally qualified health center (FQHC) sites in Brooklyn, Queens, Manhattan and the Bronx who have never been screened for Colorectal Cancer, are due for screening, and had a recent stool test (FIT or Cologuard) ordered by their Primary Care Provider.

- **Text Outreach:** Sent text messages to 300 of the identified patients and follow-up text messages to 14 patients between May and March 2026 to remind them to complete their ordered stool test. The text messages used a script from the National Colorectal Cancer Screening Roundtable (NCCSR) for never-screened and younger patients that provided information on the importance of screening alongside prompts for patients to reply if they needed a new kit or had questions.

- **Telephone Follow-Up:** Called 271 of the same patients by phone to address specific barriers and offer support, reaching 152 patients (56% of the 271 outreached patients). The phone calls also used a script from the NCCSR to engage patients, emphasized primary care provider recommendations, and set concrete targets for returning test kits.

## Impact

- **Positive Outcomes:**
  - Among patients that were texted, 28 of the 300 (9%) completed their CRC screening before receiving a phone call.
  - Among patients reached by phone, 45 (30%) completed their CRC screening.
  - Among patients not reached by phone, 21 (18%) completed their CRC screening
  - In all, 94 out of 300 (31%) patients completed screening.

## Opportunities

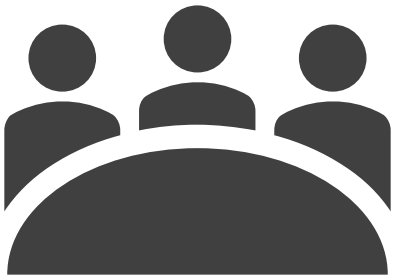
- **Target Outreach:** Use data reports to tailor outreach strategies and improve screening completion among high-risk groups.
- **Patient Communication:** Ensure text messages originate from the main organizational phone number to strengthen patient trust, improve message recognition, and increase engagement with screening outreach efforts.
- **Staffing and Sustainability:** Pursue grant funding and other resources to support staffing and intern positions and maintain program momentum.

### Testimonial

*"We definitely saw that the outreach helped navigate patients to completion. A good portion of the patients we spoke with didn't have the test or had some concerns about the stool test. We were able to help address those barriers."*

- The Community Healthcare Network Staff

# Enhancing Rural Survivorship Care: Patient Perspectives on Navigating Healthcare Needs in Rural Communities



## Project Overview

The Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital conducted a community-based focus group of rural cancer survivors and their caregivers to capture how rural environments shape their unique needs, values, and healthcare barriers.

## Main Activities

- **In-Person Focus Group:** Conducted an in-person, two-hour community-based focus group that took place on April 24th at Bassett Medical Center in Cooperstown, NY. A total of 12 cancer survivors and 2 caregivers were recruited from the Bassett Healthcare Survivorship Program to participate. Facilitators asked questions and recorded participants' verbatim narrative responses using a semi-structured interview guide.
- **Key Themes:** Analyzed and transcribed the narrative data using content analysis. The information provided by the participants – the "patient voice" - identified key areas of need and opportunities for improvement in rural survivorship care.
- **Curriculum Development:** Organized themes into overarching categories that were used to inform the curriculum content for the third NYS Survivorship Extension for Community Healthcare Outcomes (ECHO) Series. The categories resulted in; communication and coordination; accessing survivorship care in rural communities; and navigating health information in the digital age.

## Impact

- **Meaningful Engagement:** Participants expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share their lived experiences and noted that simply being heard was highly impactful.
- **Unique Context:** This project centered on patient experiences within a local, multidisciplinary community hospital, providing highly relevant context for rural healthcare constraints.
- **Applied Knowledge:** ECHO sessions generated strong discussions among attendees, helping healthcare providers brainstorm collaborative ways to improve the quality and accessibility of rural survivorship care.

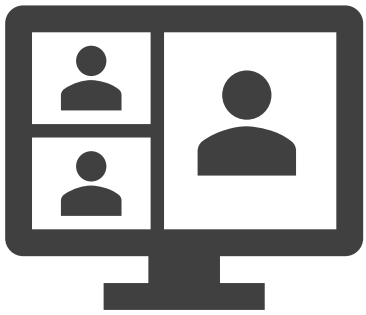
## Opportunities

- **Future Planning:** Focus group results will be shared with the Survivorship Action Team for future ECHO planning and brainstorming of future survivorship initiatives.

## Testimonial

*"Several participants expressed deep appreciation for the opportunity to share their experiences as rural cancer survivors."* - Project Leads

# The Patient Voice: Living With and Beyond Cancer in Rural Communities ECHO



## Project Overview

Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center conducted a Survivorship ECHO Series for healthcare teams and primary care professionals to provide the patient prospective on improving cancer survivorship care for cancer survivors in rural communities throughout New York State (NYS).

## Main Activities

- **Survivorship ECHO Series:** Conducted a survivorship learning series that consisted of three one-hour virtual learning sessions in June and July 2026 through Project ECHO where participants engaged with a team of experts in case-based discussions about challenges and strategies to navigating cancer care in rural communities. Content was informed by The Mary Imogene Bassett Hospital's focus group with cancer survivors. Post-session evaluation surveys were used to measure participant feedback and satisfaction.
  - **Session One, *Coordination & Communication*:** Conducted on June 11th for 45 participants. Facilitated by Sylvia K. Wood PhD, DNP, ANP-BC, AOCNP and featured speaker Maureen Killackey MD, FACS, FACOG, who facilitated conversation about barriers and best practices to coordinating rural cancer survivorship care.
  - **Session Two: *Access and Availability in Rural Survivorship Care*:** Conducted on June 18th for 33 participants. Facilitated by Tessa Flores, MD, and featured speaker Sylvia K. Wood PhD, DNP, ANP-BC, AOCNP who shared barriers and best practices to accessing rural cancer survivorship care.
  - **Session Three, *Navigating Health Information in the Digital Age*:** Conducted on July 2nd for 27 participants. Facilitated by Christina Crabtree-Ide, PhD, MPH and featured speaker Samantha Purpora, MLS, BA who shared knowledge on the topic of navigating health information for rural cancer survivors.

## Impact

- **Positive Feedback:** Evaluation responses across all sessions showed that nearly all attendees agreed that the stated objectives were met, there were enough opportunities to ask questions, and the sessions were organized and well-paced.
- **Improved Quality of Care:** Evaluation responses across all sessions showed that nearly all attendees agreed the session increased their knowledge of the subject matter, they can apply the knowledge gained into their practice, and the session will improve the quality of their practice.

## Opportunities

- **Continued Learning:** All three sessions were recorded, and slides and recordings were sent to the 108 people who registered and shared for public viewing on the NYS Cancer Consortium website.

## Testimonials

*"Excellent coordination and discussion. Easy to hear and see"*

*"It was very well put together and very informative."*

-Survivorship ECHO Series Attendees

# The Healing Table Event: Developing and Piloting an Educational Event for Food Insecure Cancer Patients



## Project Overview

Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai hosted a four-session educational event to educate cancer patients, families and caregivers in NYC about food and cancer prevention; nutrition and cancer treatment; food safety when immunocompromised; and nutrition when experiencing financial strain.

## Main Activities

- **Educational Event:** Hosted a four-session educational event in-person at the American Cancer Society (ACS) Hope Lodge and virtually via Zoom on May 5, 2026, for Mount Sinai cancer patients, Gods Love We Deliver program recipients and ACS Hope Lodge guests. The event achieved 70 total registrations, resulting in 26 in-person attendees and 13 virtual participants.
  - **Session 1: Seated Yoga & Mindfulness:** A gentle seated yoga session led by a yoga instructor that featured mindfulness practices.
  - **Session 2: Nutrition Education:** An educational session led by oncology dietitians about food safety, budget friendly meals, and what to eat to manage side effects of cancer treatments.
  - **Session 3: Culinary Demonstration:** A food demonstration led by Gods Love We Deliver staff that featured healthy eating with an emphasis on nutritious food that is available to patients experiencing financial strain.
  - **Session 4: Community Partner Tabling:** A community partner tabling session with organizations such as Teens for Food Justice, NY Connects, NY Common Pantry, and the ACS. Patients were sent home with food pantry bags and shelf-stable food items, yoga mats, sunscreen, pens, cutting boards and measuring spoons.

## Impact

- **Positive Feedback:** Post-event survey responses from 24 participants showed an 88% satisfaction rate with the educational event with 83% of participants reporting that they learned at least one new method to prepare a healthy meal, and 83% of participants reporting that they identified at least one community resource they intend to use.

## Opportunities

- **Demand for Additional Sessions:** On the post event survey participants indicated that they would like to have more nutrition education and more opportunities to attend cooking demonstrations and physical activity sessions.

### Testimonial

*"The event was wonderful. I think the larger strength was all the stakeholders we brought together and also efforts to inform our community."*

-The Healing Table Event Community Partner

# Moving For Life Dance Exercise for New York Cancer Patients and Survivors



## Project Overview

Moving For Life, Inc. provided evidence-based dance classes and physical activity educational lectures for cancer patients and survivors in underserved communities to improve participants' physical health and emotional well-being and increase their knowledge of the benefits of safe, evidence-based movement for managing the side effects of cancer treatment.

## Main Activities

- **Dance Exercise Classes:** Implemented 24 in-person, evidence-based Dance Exercise classes at Cancer Care in Deer Park, Long Island, and Metropolitan Hospital in East Harlem, NYC (12 classes at each site). Classes reached 120 participant visits (60 at each site), with an average class attendance of five participants. Metropolitan Hospital classes were offered bilingually in English and Spanish to ensure culturally and linguistically responsive access.
- **Educational Lectures:** Delivered four on-line educational lectures on the role of safe, evidence-based physical activity in managing the side effects of cancer treatment, delivered by LatinaSHARE's Moving For Life Program for 59 participants, including 40 Spanish speaking participants who accessed a recorded Spanish-language nutrition lecture. The on-line lecture was recorded and distributed through LatinaSHARE and community partners.

## Impact

- **Improved Physical Movement:** Among the 11 participants who completed post-program surveys, 55% (6 of 11) reported improvements in mobility, flexibility, range of motion, or coordination, while 27% (3 of 11) reported increased strength and 27% (3 of 11) highlighted greater social connection and peer support.
- **Increased Knowledge:** Among the 19 lecture participants who completed post-program evaluations, 63% (12 of 19) reported a significant increase in their knowledge of the benefits of physical activity for managing cancer and its treatment.

## Opportunities

- **Evaluation Strategies:** Moving For Life, Inc. will continue to strengthen future evaluations by matching pre- and post-program surveys through unique participant identifiers, allowing for more robust measurement of individual outcomes and further strengthening the evidence base for its Dance Exercise methodology.

### Testimonial

*"I started this class not knowing what to expect. After the very first I knew this was for me. My range of motion and knowledge of my body's systems have increased tremendously. The camaraderie makes all the difference. It is not dance, it is so much more. I don't want this to end. It is even something to look forward to."*

– Cancer Care Attendee

# HEALing Through Aquatic Wellness Program



## Project Overview

The Sid Jacobson Jewish Community Center (JCC) Nancy Marx Cancer Wellness Center provided free, accessible aquatic exercise classes for individuals impacted by cancer to promote safe movement, confidence, recovery, and a sense of community and enhance physical health and emotional well-being.

## Main Activities

- **Aquatic Exercise Classes:** Offered weekly aquatic exercise classes at the Sid Jacobson JCC in East Hills, NY that provided low-impact movement tailored to varying levels of strength, stamina, and mobility for adults impacted by cancer. The classes created opportunities for participants to connect with others who understand the unique challenges of the cancer experience.

## Impact

- **Improved Physical Well-Being:** Among participants who completed surveys, 90% reported improvements in their physical well-being, citing increased strength, mobility, endurance, and overall confidence in their ability to exercise. Many participants noted that the aquatic environment allowed them to move comfortably in ways that traditional exercise programs could not, particularly while recovering from treatment or managing joint pain and physical limitations
- **Improved Emotional Well-Being:** Participants described feeling more positive, motivated, and empowered as a result of attending the classes. Several shared that the program helped reduce feelings of uncertainty surrounding physical activity after cancer treatment and provided reassurance that they could safely return to movement.
- **Improved Social Connections:** Eighty percent of respondents reported an increased sense of connection. Participants consistently highlighted the value of exercising alongside others who shared similar experiences, reducing feelings of isolation and creating a welcoming sense of community.
- **Positive Feedback:** Participant satisfaction was exceptionally high, with 90% of survey respondents reporting they were satisfied or very satisfied with the program. Every survey respondent indicated they would recommend the class to others impacted by cancer.

## Opportunities

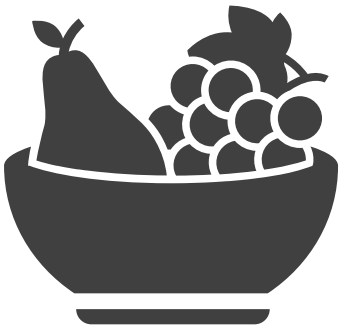
- **Demand for Future Classes:** Participants strongly valued the combination of gentle exercise, individualized support, and opportunities for social interaction, reinforcing the importance of providing exercise programs specifically designed for individuals impacted by cancer, where participants feel understood, supported, and safe.

## Testimonial

*"This class gave me confidence in moving my body and easing into exercise again that felt overwhelming to begin. Group was very welcoming."*

-Aquatic Wellness Program Attendee

## Wellness in the Schools Parent Workshop



### Project Overview

Wellness in the Schools (WITS) implemented a parent workshop series at Dos Puentes Elementary School in Washington Heights, NYC to equip parents and caregivers of students with practical nutrition knowledge, cooking skills, and evidence-based strategies that support healthier food choices and active lifestyles for themselves and their families.

### Main Activities

- **Parent Workshop Series:** Implemented a five-session parent workshop series, "Around the Table," at Dos Puentes Elementary School in Washington Heights, NYC between March and May 2026 for 20 parents and caregivers of students, with weekly attendance ranging from 9 to 19 participants. The workshops focused on increasing participants' confidence in planning healthy meals, understanding the difference between whole and ultra-processed foods, preparing nutritious meals on a budget, reducing sugar consumption, and developing basic cooking skills.
- **Hands-On Sessions:** Structured sessions around a nutrition or wellness concept, followed by a hands-on cooking activity that reinforced the lesson. Classes were spaced one to two weeks apart to give participants time to practice incorporating the concepts into their daily lives. At the beginning of each subsequent class, participants shared strategies, discussed any challenges they encountered, and worked together as a group to problem-solve barriers to implementation.
- **Community Development:** Held workshop discussions in a circle to reinforce that every participant has valuable experiences and perspectives to contribute rather than positioning the instructor as the sole source of knowledge at the front of the class. Provided a class-specific WhatsApp group where participants could stay connected between sessions, share updates, ask questions, and post photos of recipes or healthy meals they prepared.

### Impact

- **Strong Attendance:** Attendance was consistently strong throughout the workshop despite classes being held during the daytime.
- **Social Connections:** As caregivers connected through their children's school, they have formed new relationships with others who share similar goals of leading healthier lives.

### Opportunities

- **Match Language Proficiency:** Ensure future workshops serving predominantly Spanish-speaking communities use presenters that are fluent in Spanish to improve communication, increase participant engagement, and provide a more seamless learning experience.
- **Free Educational Sessions:** Provide classes, educational materials, and food at no cost to participants to reduce barriers to participation.

### Testimonial

*"We received positive feedback from participants throughout the workshop, particularly regarding the pace of instruction and our intentional efforts to build a sense of community among participants."* – WITS Staff