



VOICES OF BLACK WOMEN

2026 eNewsletter



Members of the Las Vegas community supporting VOICES of Black Women at local event.

At **VOICES of Black Women**, we believe every story matters!

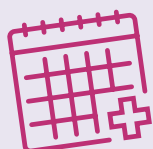
Because of you, VOICES – a groundbreaking American Cancer Society (ACS) study – is more than research; it is a movement. Since our launch in 2024, thousands of Black women have stepped forward, choosing to be seen, to be heard, and to help shape a future where our health, experiences, and lives are fully represented.

Each VOICES survey completed, each story shared, and each connection made brings us closer to a world where Black women no longer face disparities in silence, but instead stand at the center of discovery, innovation, and care. Together we are building a legacy – one that will empower our daughters, granddaughters, and communities for years to come.

In this year's newsletter, we celebrate how far we've come and look ahead to where we're going. Among the highlights:

- More than 6,000 women are part of VOICES, which is now open to women ages 20 to 60.
- We share the motivation behind including two topics in our VOICES survey: personal care products and menopause.
- An update on how our staff and volunteers are helping raise awareness and a look at VOICES in the News.

Thank you for lending your voice. **Together, we are transforming research into representation, and representation into lasting change.**



Mark your Calendar!

September 17, 2026, 12 P.M. ET: Join our annual VOICES Participant Webinar
October 2026: Annual Health Update available on [Participant Portal](#)

Enrollment Update

Since the launch of VOICES in 2024:

- Over 6,000 participants have enrolled in the study. Your participation will have a lasting impact on cancer research for many years to come. We are extremely grateful for your partnership, as we strive toward our goal to reach 100,000 Black women.
- We're excited to share that our study is growing, and more people can now join VOICES as our eligibility has been expanded to women **ages 20 to 60!** This ensures VOICES represents diverse perspectives across different stages of life. As a study participant, you are a trusted advocate. Help us grow this movement by sharing this opportunity with anyone you know who is [eligible to join](#).
- Through the VOICES **optional blood substudy**, we have collected nearly 700 samples from participants. We sincerely thank all participants who chose to take part in this substudy; your contribution will help unlock even more answers.

Survey Questions – New and Emerging Topics

At VOICES, our goal is to continually evolve our research to reflect the real-world experiences, concerns, and priorities of Black women. With input from you, **personal care products** and **menopause** are two important topic areas where the knowledge gaps remain and further research is needed.

Personal Care Products

Personal care products such as hair products, skin care items, cosmetics, and fragrances are an essential part of daily life. Black women often use a wide range of culturally specific products and may start using them at younger ages. However, many of these products contain ingredients that are still being studied for potential health effects.

Historically, Black women have been underrepresented in research examining how long-term exposure to these products may influence cancer risk and overall health. By collecting detailed information on the use of personal care products, VOICES aims to better understand patterns of exposure and contribute to research that can inform safer product development and policy.

Elevating Women's Experiences Across the Life Course

Menopause is a major life transition that can influence physical, emotional, and long-term health, including risks related to cancer and other chronic conditions. However, it has not received the level of research attention it deserves-especially among Black women.

Black women may experience menopause differently, including earlier onset or more severe symptoms, but these differences are not fully understood due to gaps in research. By expanding our questions around pre-, peri-, and post-menopause, VOICES aims to capture a more complete picture of women's health and identify opportunities to improve care, support, and outcomes.

Please let us know what additional topics you would like to learn more about, and we will consider them for upcoming surveys. Additionally, **be sure to visit your [participant portal](#) and complete any open surveys.**

VOICES Community Spotlight

Strong community partnerships are at the heart of the VOICES study. These collaborations help expand our reach and ensure that more Black women have the opportunity to share their experiences and be represented in cancer research.

We are proud to announce our first partners: National Coalition of 100 Black Women, Central Commonwealth Black Caucus, and Chi Eta Phi Society Inc. Through these strategic partnerships, VOICES can expand recruitment efforts and outreach. Together, we are strengthening connections and increasing engagement with communities across the country.

In the News

The VOICES study continues to gain national recognition through impactful conversations and media features:

- **Dr. Opal Lee**, activist, former educator, and Nobel Peace Prize nominee, championed our VOICES study in an [interview](#) celebrating Juneteenth.
- **Dr. Lauren McCullough**, co-lead investigator of the VOICES leadership team, joined the *Mind, Body and Business* [podcast](#) to discuss the importance of transforming the future of Black women's health.
- In a recent [interview](#), **Dr. McCullough** also highlighted how fear and anxiety around breast cancer screenings among Black women are shaped by both personal and historical experiences, noting that “fear is shaped by lived and historical experiences, including knowledge of worse outcomes in their communities.”
- **Dr. Alpa Patel**, co-lead investigator of the VOICES leadership team, participated in a [panel discussion](#) on disparities in cancer research at *The Atlantic* magazine's 2026 People v. Cancer Summit, emphasizing the importance of building trust with participants (discussion begins at the 57:00-minute mark).
- [Sisters on the Mic](#) **Sybil Wilkes** interviewed VOICES team members **Eunice Larbi** and **Kaela Jolibois** about the value of representation in cancer research and how Black women can get involved in the study.



Dr. Opal Lee, activist, former educator, and Nobel Peace Prize nominee

Through these partnerships and national conversations, VOICES continues to raise awareness and amplify the voices of Black women in research, ensuring they are seen, heard, and represented.



Dr. Lauren McCullough, co-lead investigator of VOICES (3rd from left) with, left to right, **Cierra Johnson** of NBC4, **Stephanie Hightower**, President & CEO of the Columbus Urban League, **Dr. Cheryl Lee**, Deputy Director, Center for Community Outreach and Engagement, The James Cancer Hospital, **Yvette McGee Brown**, former Ohio Supreme Court Justice and community advocate at Ohio event.

Meet Our Staff

The **VOICES of Black Women study** is led by Black women for Black women. Three of these leaders, Eunice Larbi, Kaela Jolibois, and Jessica Clark, are helping build meaningful connections with communities across the country while advancing a mission rooted in health equity, trust, and impact.



Eunice Larbi, MPH

As the VOICES community-based research engagement manager, Eunice collaborates with research and outreach teams to support equity-focused study design, marketing, and participant recruitment. She also works closely with ACS regional staff and volunteers to develop and implement community outreach strategies that increase awareness and engagement.

“Getting to work on something that could change the lives of generations of women who look like me is a dream come true. Working on VOICES makes me feel like I’m doing my part to fight for the lives of my community.”



Kaela Jolibois, MPH

Kaela is dedicated to making sure Black women and their experiences are represented in health research. As the VOICES study partnerships manager, she leads outreach and partnership development efforts, including cultivating relationships with partner organizations, supporting recruitment initiatives, and coordinating grant-funded programs.

“I want to see myself and my community reflected in health research and recommendations. Supporting this work gives me hope that as Black women, our stories and experiences will finally drive the changes we deserve for cancer outcomes and beyond.”



Jessica Clark, MPH

As the VOICES study coordinator, Jessica oversees the coordination of study activities and supports efforts to engage and recruit participants. In her role, she collaborates with volunteers and ambassadors to strengthen community engagement, expand outreach, and advance the study’s mission.

“Working on VOICES is important to me because Black women need to be heard and seen. Our voices and experiences matter.”

Together, Eunice, Kaela, and Jessica play a central role within the VOICES team and foster community collaboration to ensure Black women are fully represented in cancer research and care. Their work goes beyond recruitment and outreach as it builds trust and amplifies this groundbreaking initiative.



Thank you for sharing your voice to improve the health of Black women for generations to come!

For any questions related to **VOICES**, including changes to your contact information, please email us at thevoices@cancer.org or call us at **1-800-494-4113**. We are available Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET.

For the latest cancer information, please visit cancer.org or call us at 1-800-227-2345.



Stay up to date: voices.cancer.org

