

Medical Research: It's About Averl



"Today's cures were yesterday's clinical trials and today's clinical studies are tomorrow's cures."

In January 2009, Averl Anderson was shocked to learn that she had breast cancer. Having conducted outreach for both HIV/AIDS and cervical cancer prevention, she was more in tune with her health than most. As a volunteer for the Buffalo-Niagara Witness Project, a cancer prevention program based at Roswell Park Cancer Institute in her hometown of Buffalo, NY, Averl participated in a breast cancer screening project. It was there she learned she had stage 3 triple-negative breast cancer, a very aggressive form of breast cancer more common in African-American women.

Shortly after diagnosis, her oncologist at Roswell Park recommended that she enroll in a federally-funded clinical trial. Averl acknowledges that many people around her expressed hesitation about participating in clinical trials. "You can say 'They're not going to experiment on me. Let someone else be the guinea pig,'" she says. "But let me tell you, if there had not been other 55-year-old African-American women who participated in clinical research, I might not be here today." In early 2014, Averl celebrated two milestones - turning 60 and being cancer-free for five years. However, she recently learned her cancer has returned. While that might dampen the spirits of some, Averl is nothing if not optimistic. In fact, she's an even more resolute advocate for clinical trials.



**1 in 8 American women will develop invasive breast cancer*.
In partnership with nonprofit organizations, the NIH is
conducting large-scale clinical trials to better prevent,
diagnose and treat this disease..
We've made progress. But the funding to sustain it is eroding.
Congress: harness your compassion, gather your will, and fund
the National Institutes of Health at \$32 billion in FY15.
Do it for Averl.**

www.researchamerica.org

Image Courtesy of Roswell Park Cancer Institute

*breastcancer.org