

All Cancer License Plate 2025-2026 Awardee: Grady Cancer Center for Excellence

Grady has maintained an unwavering commitment to serving any Atlanta resident in need of care and is the safety net hospital for the Metro Atlanta area, committed to providing access to comprehensive, timely cancer care to medically underserved populations. Grady primarily serves Fulton and DeKalb Counties, where residents are at greatest risk for experiencing gaps in cancer screening and treatment services.

Grady's Cancer Center's top cancer sites include prostate, breast, colorectal, lung, and gynecologic. 83% of cancer patients treated at Grady are African American, 10% are White, 5% are Hispanic, and the remaining 2% identify as another race, and 75% are from Fulton or DeKalb County. Many patients are uninsured or underinsured. Approximately 20% of Grady's cancer patients are uninsured, and 60% are covered through Medicaid or Medicare.

Overall, the patients served at Grady are younger at age of diagnosis and are diagnosed at later stages compared to national data. Over the past five years, the majority of our patients were under the age of 60 versus national data showing a majority of cancer diagnoses in adults over the age of 60. We also have a lower rate of early-stage diagnosis (Grady: 23% Stage I diagnosis vs National: 31% Stage I diagnosis) and a higher rate of Stage IV diagnosis – almost 25% for Grady patients compared to just over 15% nationally.

There is a well-documented need for culturally competent programs that reduce barriers to cancer care. According to the American Cancer Society's most current data, an estimated 66,210 individuals in Georgia will be newly diagnosed with cancer in 2025, and 19,090 are estimated to die from their disease (American Cancer Society, Cancer Facts and Figures 2025). Individuals with lower socioeconomic status have disproportionately higher cancer death rates, as do racial and ethnic minorities. It has been found that African American men and women, although they have a lower rate of cancer incidence, have a higher rate of cancer mortality than White men and women.

Because of these trends, it is imperative that Grady Health System reach individuals throughout the community, providing education and resources about the importance of self-screening and receiving the recommended screenings to reduce the incidence of cancer. Taking the message into the community beyond the health system's walls is an important part of the Cancer Center's work to ensure we connect with individuals in need of these screenings in order to reach as much of the Metro Atlanta community as possible.

To support our current and future patients, the Grady Cancer Center's Public Education and Outreach Program will:

- Educate the Metro Atlanta community about cancer screening and treatment, focusing on colorectal, lung, and prostate cancers. The outreach team will distribute cancer awareness information while participating in at least eight community outreach events throughout the year.
- Identify up to three additional community organizations with which to partner to provide cancer education and awareness.
- Provide newly diagnosed colorectal, lung, and prostate cancer patients with cancer treatment handbooks, providing education and guidance on cancer treatment and recovery, while also offering understanding and encouragement. We will distribute 100 of these handbooks to our newly diagnosed cancer patients.

With these educational touchpoints, the Cancer Center will reach at least 300 individuals, underscoring the importance of screening and treatment for all types of cancer.

Grady's Georgia Cancer Center for Excellence's Public Outreach and Education Program collaborates with government, faith-based, and non-profit organizations throughout Metro Atlanta. This partnership provides the opportunity to interact with community members and educate them on the importance of cancer screening. Some of the organizations in which the Cancer Center has or will collaborate with in 2025 include: Health Care for All 2025 Health Fair with The Atlanta Commission on Women; City of Union City Light Up the Night & Back to School Bash; Department of Aviation Health Fair; City of South Fulton District 1 & 2 Health and Wellness Expo; Atlanta Ice Cream Festival; The HERitage Health Experience; and Tatas and Tutus Breast Cancer Awareness Event. Many will again be partners in 2026, but we are consistently identifying additional organizations in which to partner throughout the year.

With the support of the Georgia Center for Oncology Research and Education, it is our goal to provide cancer education to 300 individuals during the grant period, and of those, we anticipate that all will obtain a higher level of understanding about the importance and benefits of cancer screening.

To ensure that Grady's Georgia Cancer Center for Excellence's Public Outreach and Education Program reaches its intended audience, the outreach team uses Grady statistics highlighting the areas of most need (those in health deserts with residents who are un- or underinsured) across the Metro Atlanta community. This helps guide the team as they identify potential partners in which to collaborate to provide cancer education at the community events being held in these targeted communities.

As outreach events are attended, the Public Outreach and Education Program team tracks the education that they provide, giving the Cancer Center a comprehensive overview of how many individuals received cancer screening information.

The Cancer Center's outreach team uses these events to not only provide cancer education but to also help individuals make screening appointments. They provide information on how to schedule screening appointments and where to go on Grady's campus. Patient sign-up forms are used at outreach events to assist with this process in addition to helping conduct follow-up to determine if screenings were completed. For those individuals who complete cancer screening, and if cancer is detected, the outreach team provides newly diagnosed cancer patients with cancer treatment handbooks to help support their cancer journey.