

**3rd Annual Town Hall Meeting**  
**Translating Breast Cancer and Environmental Research into Action**

*California Breast Cancer Research Program*  
*Community-Based Participatory Research Grants and Initiatives*

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The California Breast Cancer Research Program (CBCRP) was created in 1993 as a result of a collaboration of breast cancer advocates, scientists, health care professionals, state legislators, and University of California officials. CBCRP is funded, in part, by a \$0.02 per pack cigarette sales tax, generating approximately \$38 million per year. Other funds are raised from a breast cancer tax check-off on state income tax forms, and from individuals, corporate and foundation support.

Dr. Kavanaugh-Lynch is the program's director and gave an overview of its goals and a few of CBCRP's achievements through their Community Research Collaboration (CRC) awards. Since the inception of those awards, 59 teams have been funded for a total of \$14.2 million. What these teams have in common is that they use community-based participatory research (CBPR) and they address the needs of under-served groups, such as women of color, disabled, rural, and lesbian communities.

CRC was established to create a bridge between community concerns and research, so that community members would understand more about research design and researchers would gain understanding of community needs and issues. It is important for these groups to work as equal partners to "identify the research question, develop the research plan, carry out the research, interpret the results, and disseminate the results".

Kavanaugh-Lynch gave brief synopses of three projects that have been funded with CRC awards. The first, Marin Breast Cancer Watch (now known as Zero Breast Cancer), was one of the leaders of the Town Hall Meeting.

Zero Breast Cancer, formed in 1995 as a local grassroots organization, has become a national leader in conducting community-based participatory research. With community involvement, Zero Breast Cancer conducted the first breast cancer study in Marin County, *The Adolescent Risk Factor Study and the Development of Breast Cancer*, which looked at whether adolescent experiences and exposures are different between women who have breast cancer and those who do not. Zero Breast Cancer has become a successful research collaborator and leads the Community Outreach and Translation Core of the Bay Area Breast Cancer and the Environment Research Center (BABCERC).

The second group that was discussed was the Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA), which was founded in 1997 with the mission of building a healthier and stronger community by enhancing the well-being of Asians and Pacific Islanders. They are now involved in global health research.

One of OCAPICA's milestone achievements was to file for and be granted a license to run its own community Institutional Review Board. As a result, all research done in Orange County passes through their review process to ensure that human subject protections are in place and that under-represented communities have a voice regarding research.

The final group that Dr. Kavanaugh-Lynch highlighted was the Cancer Resource Center of Mendocino County (CRCMC), which was created in 1995 by a small group of women living with cancer who had sought information and resources and found there was no place to go locally. Since then they have become a central and essential part of their rural community. This year the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation is honoring Sara O'Donnell, one of the founders and the current executive director of CRCMC for her leadership in providing accessible support services for cancer patients, their families and caregivers, and for her environmental health advocacy.

The value of funding community-academic partnerships has been far reaching. Research questions have been unique and more relevant. Under-served groups have become involved and there has been better recruitment and retention of research participants. There has been a more rapid translation of research results to the community and to scientific audiences. Finally, it has led to the formation of lasting collaborations between communities and academic researchers.