

# New York Beacon

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The Guiding Light to Truth and Justice

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## Health

### Affordable Care Act reduces racial disparities in cancer treatment: report

**I**t turns out the Affordable Care Act may have acted to make care affordable and accessible to black folks.

According to new research, the law has been linked to a reduction in racial disparities in the care of cancer patients and to earlier diagnoses and treatment for ovarian cancer, according to the Washington Post.

The findings, released Sunday as abstracts at the

annual meeting in Chicago of the American Society of Clinical Oncology, which attracts upwards of 40,000 cancer specialists.

According to the Post, researchers saw that black citizens with advanced cancer were 4.8 percentage points less likely to begin treatment for their disease within a month of diagnosis before the ACA's passage.



### 'We're still here'—HIV long term survivors meet



By Chandra Wilson

**"W**e're still here!" was the theme of the June 5 celebration of survivors of long-term HIV. Hosted by the Long Term Survivors Wellness Coalition, the event celebrated their ability to age positively while calling attention to their unique situation and special needs. Medication management, drug interactions and side effects, comorbidities, maintaining good mental health and sexual wellness were among the issues addressed.

Timothy Lunceford-Stevens led attendees in a moment of silence in recognition of the recent death of the coalition's co-founder, Amy Velez. "As long-term survivors of HIV, we know how to be strong, resilient, and advocate for our health," said Graham Harrison, MA, Director of the Care and Treatment Program at the Bureau of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control. "Today we come together to celebrate in a spirit of radical self-love, knowing that in order to support each other and nurture a world that embraces all of us living with and affected by HIV, we need to start being mindful of our bodies, our diet, our mental

health, our relationships, and our ability to be present with each other as a community."

"As the number of long-term survivors throughout New York continues to grow," said Oni Blackstock, MD, MHS, Assistant Commissioner of the Bureau of HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control in her opening remarks, "the bureau remains steadfast in our commitment to both prevent and treat HIV/AIDS among all New Yorkers."

Highlights of the celebration, which took place at the Baruch College Vertical Campus Conference Center, included a Long-term survivors' panel discussion and an unveiling of a new National Resource Center on HIV and Aging, by Stephen Kargilek, PhD, International AIDS Society member and Associate Director for Research at the AIDS Community Research Initiative of America.

Panel discussion was moderated by Ed Shaw, founding member and Chair Emeritus of the Consumer Advisory Board at GMHC, who dedicated more than 25 years to raising awareness of the needs of seniors at risk or living with HIV/AIDS. The panel included nationally recognized writer, speaker and long-time HIV/AIDS activist, Teri Anderson,

founder of "Let's Kick ASS—AIDS Survivor Syndrome," Julia Sanchez, a Certified Peer Worker and Facilitator for The Positive Life Workshop at The Family Center, Octavia Y. Lewis, MPA, a transgender woman of color living with HIV who works as an activist, advocate, mother and scholar, and Community Ambassador with AmidaCare, and Billy Fields, a former AIT manager and advocate appointed to the NYC HIV Planning Council by former Mayor Michael Bloomberg and current Mayor Bill De Blasio.

Awards, presentations, networking and breakout activities were held throughout the day focusing on food, cooking, nutrition and wellness demonstrations from Sophia Medinsky, RD at Heritage House, art therapy (by VisualAIDS), Yoga/Meditation (by Safiya Hassan), a sexual wellness discussion (by August Eckhardt from The Pleasure Chest) and a DJ, photo booth, dinner and dancing. The films Last Men Standing (documentary from San Francisco Chronicle) and Never Alone, developed by the Long View Coalition were also screened.

Those represented were the NYC Health Department, The New York City Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual & Transgender Community Center, Visiting Nurse Service of New York, SAGE Advocacy & Services for LGBT Elders, ACRIA, GMHC (Gay Men's Health Crisis), and AgingHIV.org, was formed two years ago by AIDS activists and original ACT UP members, Andy Velez and Timothy Lunceford-Stevens, who envisioned a collaborative of HIV/AIDS service organizations and individuals.

"Helping long-term survivors of HIV—both men and women—feel confident, proud and supported, with access to the health care they need to live full and active lives is what the coalition strives to do," said Arthur Fitting, RN, LGBT Program Manager at the Visiting Nurse Service of New York.



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