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Legendary Entertainer Ben Vereen Teams Up with Blue Faery to Raise Awareness About Liver Cancer During Black History Month

Media Invited to Participate

Blue Faery: The Adrienne Wilson Liver Cancer Association (Blue Faery) is excited to partner with Hollywood and Broadway legend Ben Vereen on a campaign for Black History Month to raise awareness about liver cancer. Black/African Americans are 1.5 times more likely to get liver cancer than the general population,¹ and incidence rates are rising.² Mr. Vereen's personal experience with type 2 diabetes and hepatitis C, which can both lead to liver cancer, offers an authentic and compelling message to encourage fellow community members to learn more about their risks and the importance of actively managing them. Mr. Vereen was diagnosed with hepatitis C after a blood transfusion and five years ago was able to be cured. He actively manages his type 2 diabetes and has had it under control for over a decade.

The first **Love Your Liver Live, A Black History Month Community Event** takes place on February 9, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. ET (5:30 p.m. CT/3:30 p.m. PT) and features Dr. Patricia Jones, a leading hepatologist from the Black community in Miami. This free online educational workshop allows community members to learn from a trusted community physician why they may be at higher risk for liver cancer. Media is invited to participate in the online workshop and/or schedule pre- or post-event interviews with Mr. Vereen and/or Dr. Jones.

"Liver cancer cases continue to swell in the Black community," said Dr. Jones, "It is important that community members see doctors and healthcare professionals who understand their cultural perspectives and focus on their unique risk factors. Too many members of our community are dying from preventable diseases, and we have the power to change these statistics."

- Black/African Americans are less likely to be diagnosed with liver cancer at an early stage and have the highest mortality rates of any racial or ethnic group in the U.S.²
- Black/African Americans are almost 2 times more likely to develop type 2 diabetes which can lead to liver cancer³
- Black/African Americans are almost 2 times more likely to die from hepatitis C compared to non-Hispanic White Americans,⁴ which can develop into hepatocellular carcinoma (HCC), the most common form of liver cancer,⁵ at earlier stages of liver disease than members of other racial groups⁶

Lifestyle changes may help lower the risk of liver cancer.⁷ If liver cancer is detected early, surgery, including a transplant, may be possible to remove the cancer.⁸ There are also FDA-approved treatment options for advanced liver cancer when surgery may not be an option.⁹ Culturally relevant liver cancer education can empower the Black/African American community to take charge of their health by learning about the underlying causes of liver cancer and how to be proactive about liver health.

Blue Faery is also partnering with Delta Research and Educational Foundation “Research Matters for All of Us” to help reach high-risk community members and encourage them to learn more about liver cancer and why it is so important to “love your liver.”

“We are excited to partner with Blue Faery to promote this important campaign,” said Dr. Kay Williams-Dawson, Program Manager for Delta Research and Educational Foundation “Research Matters for All of Us” and Program Director for Cathedral House, Inc. “We hope to reach as many of our community members as possible and encourage them to attend this free online event. This knowledge will empower us all to become better health advocates for ourselves and our loved ones.”

What: Live online liver cancer educational workshop and Q&A with Patricia Jones, MD, MSCR, Hepatologist and Associate Professor, Department of Medicine at the University of Miami’s Divisions of Digestive Health and Liver Diseases.

This live webinar is educational; it is not intended to offer specific medical advice to patients or attendees.

When: February 9, 2023, at 6:30 p.m. ET (5:30 p.m. CT/3:30 p.m. PT)

Who should attend: Community members and advocates, media, people living with liver cancer or liver disease, family members, and/or caregivers.

Registration: Visit loveyourliver.us to register and get more information on liver cancer. Advanced registration is required.

This event is sponsored by AstraZeneca, Exelixis, Eisai, Merck, and Genentech.

About Blue Faery

Founded in 2002, the mission of Blue Faery: The Adrienne Wilson Liver Cancer Association is to prevent, treat, and cure primary liver cancer through research, education, and advocacy. Blue Faery's Patient Resource Guides for Liver Cancer are free for patients, their families, and their healthcare providers. Blue Faery hosts an online Liver Cancer Community for patients and caregivers and gives an annual award to recognize researchers who have made significant contributions to the advancement of scientific knowledge in the diagnosis, treatment, prevention, or understanding of primary liver cancer. To learn more, visit bluefaery.org.

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¹ Shaltiel T, Zheng S, Siderides C, et al. Hepatitis C Position Black Patients Develop Hepatocellular Carcinoma at Earlier Stages of Liver Disease and Present with More Aggressive Phenotype. *Cancer*. 2021 May 01; 127(9): 1395–1406. doi:10.1002/cncr.33377.

² Ajayi F, Jan J, Gingal A, Rich N. Racial and Sex Disparities in Hepatocellular Carcinoma and the USA. *Curr Hepatol Rep*. 2020 December; 19(4): 462–469. doi:10.1007/s11901-020-00554-6.

³ Factors contributing to a higher incidence of diabetes for Black Americans | National Institutes of Health (NIH). Accessed November 18, 2022.

⁴ [Hepatitis and African Americans - The Office of Minority Health \(hhs.gov\)](https://www.hhs.gov/health-topics/hepatitis-and-african-americans/). Accessed November 20, 2022.

⁵ Rawla P, Sunkara T, Muralidharan P, Raj J. Update in global trends and aetiology of hepatocellular carcinoma. *Contemp Oncol*. 2018;22(3):141-150. doi:10.5114/wo.2018.78941

⁶ Shaltiel T, Zheng S, Siderides C, et al. Hepatitis C Position Black Patients Develop Hepatocellular Carcinoma at Earlier Stages of Liver Disease and Present with More Aggressive Phenotype. *Cancer*. 2021 May 01; 127(9): 1395–1406. doi:10.1002/cncr.33377.

⁷ Balogh J, Victor D 3rd, Asham EH, et al. Hepatocellular carcinoma: a review. *J Hepatocellular Carcinoma*. 2016; 3:41-53. doi:10.2147/JHC.S61146.

⁸ National Comprehensive Cancer Network. 2020 Liver Cancer Hepatobiliary Cancers.

<https://www.nccn.org/patients/guidelines/content/PDF/liver-hp-patient.pdf>. Accessed September 11, 2020.

⁹ Li D, Sedano S, Allen R, Gong J, Cho M, Sharma S. Current treatment landscape for advanced hepatocellular carcinoma: patient outcomes and the impact on quality of life. *Cancers (Basel)*. 2019;11(6):841. doi:10.3390/cancers11060841.