

# Lifelines

from the National Cancer Institute



## **AFRICAN AMERICANS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT THE FREE CONFIDENTIAL 1-800-4-CANCER INFORMATION SERVICE**

*By the National Cancer Institute*

*Bethesda, MD* - An African American man in his 60's has read about a new targeted therapy for lung cancer. His friend, a pack a day smoker for over 30 years, was recently diagnosed with lung cancer. He wants to know more about this treatment option and what side effects his friend might experience.

Every day, people in the African American community have questions about cancer, whether about their own fight with the disease, or about a family member, a friend or a co-worker. The National Cancer Institute (NCI) can help you get the answers to your questions over the telephone at no cost to you. When you call 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237), a free and confidential service of the NCI, a cancer information specialist is ready and willing to assist you on the line, taking as much time as you need to answer the questions that you have about cancer.

The Cancer Information Service (CIS) is available to everyone. But given how cancer health disparities are affecting African Americans and other minority communities, the NCI is encouraging more members of communities of color to learn about and use the service. One way to address cancer health disparities is to make sure all communities have access to the same information. Statistics show that African Americans have the nation's highest cancer rates and number of deaths.

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When you call 1-800-4-CANCER, a highly trained information specialist will provide you with information that is right for you based on your unique situation. While information specialists can provide answers to many questions and help you understand more about cancer, they do not take the place of a doctor and cannot provide medical advice. What they can do, however, is direct you to sources of reliable and accurate cancer information. In fact, that is what the CIS was created to do – to connect the calling public with accurate and useful cancer education information. This includes helping people use our website, which contains cancer information tailored specifically to African Americans, including articles, videos, and even audio files ([www.cancer.gov/lifelines](http://www.cancer.gov/lifelines)).

“When a person contacts the CIS, their personal information is kept confidential and they receive tailored responses to their questions about cancer,” said Mary Anne Bright, who heads the CIS. “Often, a patient or their loved ones contact CIS for information about cancer prevention, early detection, symptoms, questions to ask their doctor, cancer treatment and/or palliative care. Our Cancer Information Specialists are highly trained, caring individuals, who take time to fully address the person’s cancer information needs.”

Anyone can call 1-800-4-CANCER. A doctor does not need to place the call for you and you do not have to provide any private information about insurance or anything else. As a member of the public, you are free to call and ask questions during the business hours that are Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. until 8 pm. Eastern Time. Service is offered in English and Spanish. You can also access Live Help online or even send e-mail. For more information about the CIS and how you can use the service, go to: <http://www.cancer.gov/aboutnci/cis/page1>.