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Connecting Hope and Medical Science

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Connecting Hope  
and Medical Science

# Focus ON THE Search

Clinical trials advancing the quest for cancer treatment, management, and prevention.

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- Report About Cancer Information
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## October is National Breast Cancer Awareness Month

Begun more than 20 years ago, National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM) is an organization comprised of several national public service organizations, professional medical associations, and government agencies working in partnership to build breast cancer awareness, share information, and provide access to screening services. NBCAM and its website — [www.nbcam.com](http://www.nbcam.com) — are year-round resources for patients, survivors, caregivers, and the general public. The organization focuses on encouraging women to take charge of their own breast health by practicing regular self-breast exams, making sure to schedule an annual mammogram, adhering to prescribed treatments, and knowing the facts about recurrence.

## Report About Survivors Seeking Cancer Information

National Cancer Institute (NCI) collects nationally representative data about the American public's use of cancer-related information, in its HINTS (Health Information National Trends) survey. HINTS was created to monitor changes in the rapidly-evolving field of health communication. HINTS Brief #10: Focus on Survivorship, explores how people who have been touched by cancer actively use available resources to seek information about the disease (<http://hints.cancer.gov/briefs.jsp>). For example, compared to the general population of U.S. adults, cancer survivors and people with a family history of the disease are more likely to seek out cancer information: 63 percent of survivors and 54 percent of people with a family history as compared to 27 percent of people with no personal or family history of cancer.

- A person is considered a cancer survivor from the time of diagnosis, through the balance of his or her life.
- In 2004 it was estimated that there were 10.8 million cancer survivors in the U.S., representing approximately 3.7 percent of the population. Approximately 14 percent of this group were diagnosed more than 20 years ago.
- 60 percent of survivors are currently 65 years of age and older.

## Focus ON THE Search

*Focus on the Search* is a quarterly publication of resources for people who are current or past participants in cancer clinical trials in Colorado and for people who have been recently diagnosed with cancer.

Colorado Cancer Research Program (CCRP) is a non-profit organization, a partnership of 17 Colorado community hospitals, and their affiliated doctors, dedicated to the advancement of cancer research and care close to home. CCRP is a Community Clinic Oncology Program, one of 50 such programs nationwide.

### CCRP's Partner Hospitals

Boulder Community Hospital  
Exempla Lutheran Medical Center  
Exempla Saint Joseph Hospital  
Longmont United Hospital  
McKee Medical Center  
Medical Centers of Aurora  
North Colorado Medical Center  
North Suburban Medical Center  
Penrose-St. Francis Health Services  
Porter Adventist Hospital  
Presbyterian/St. Luke's Medical Center  
Rose Medical Center  
St. Anthony Hospitals  
St. Mary-Corwin Medical Center  
St. Mary's Hospital  
Sky Ridge Medical Center  
Swedish Medical Center

## What's New from CCRP

### CCRP Trial Participant Advisory Council (TPAC) Now Meeting in Two Locations

On October 30, 2008, CCRP will kick off the Colorado Springs/Pueblo TPAC. The dinner meeting will take place at Penrose Cancer Center (2222 North Nevada Avenue in Colorado Springs) from 6:00-8:00PM.

On November 6, 2008, the fall Denver TPAC meeting will take place at CCRP (2253 South Oneida) from 6:00-8:00PM.

TPAC brings the knowledge, skills, and perspectives of trial participants to CCRP. All current and past trial participants are welcome to attend meetings and engage in this effort. Personal invitations will be forthcoming.

### General Request for Volunteers for CCRP

CCRP needs volunteers — for everything from helping with mailings and other special projects to regular on-going general clerical help. If you are interested in being a CCRP volunteer, please contact Todd McKinley at 303/777-2663.

## New Genetic Test Approved for Breast Cancer Patients

- The SPOT-Light HER2 CISH kit is a test that measures the number of copies of the HER2 gene in tumor tissue. A healthy breast cell has two copies of the HER2 gene; patients with breast cancer have more copies, prompting their body to overproduce HER2 protein. Overproduction causes cells to grow and divide much too quickly.
- The test counts the number of HER2 genes in a small sample of removed tumor. The tissue can be stored for future reference.
- The FDA based its approval of the test on a study using tumor samples from patients in the U.S. and Finland, which confirmed that the test was effective in determining how many HER2 genes were in these patients.

## Update on Sister Study: A Study of the Environmental and Genetic Risk Factors for Breast Cancer

The Sister Study is the only long-term study of women aged 35-74 who have a sister who had breast cancer. It is a national study to learn how environment and genes affect the chances of getting breast cancer. The study has had a tremendous response and is close to reaching its goal of enrolling 50,000 women. At this time, the study is only enrolling women from groups that are underrepresented in the study. Specifically, the study needs African Americans, Latinas, Asians/Pacific Islanders, and Native Americans between ages 35-74 and Caucasians between the ages of 65-74 or with a high school degree or less. ([www.sisterstudy.org/English/index1.htm](http://www.sisterstudy.org/English/index1.htm))

### Colorado Breast and Women's Reproductive Cancers Fund (BWRC Fund)

You can make a difference for breast and women's reproductive cancers by selecting the check off fund on your Colorado income tax form. Donations fund a competitive grant program. Grants provide assistance for Coloradans who need help but don't qualify for existing programs and would otherwise "fall through the cracks." All funds stay in Colorado. For more information, visit [www.coloradocancercoalition.org](http://www.coloradocancercoalition.org).



### Whole Foods at Hampden and Tamarac in Denver to Have CCRP Donation Day

Date to come... CCRP will get 5 percent of all sales made.

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Connecting Hope and Medical Science

## This Issue's Featured Clinical Trials

### ALTO for Breast Cancer

- ALTO (Adjuvant Lapatinib And/Or Trastuzumab Treatment Optimisation study) is an international, phase III clinical trial of two targeted therapies for HER2-positive breast cancer. (HER2 is a protein found in high levels on up to 25 percent of all breast cancers. Tumors that overproduce HER2 tend to be more aggressive and more likely to recur than those that do not.)
- The medications being tested (lapatinib/Tykerb® and trastuzumab/Herceptin®) target HER2 in different ways. Researchers want to find out whether one drug will prove better than the other or if the two drugs will work better together.
- The ALTO study will enroll 8,000 participants in 50 countries. Women with HER2-positive breast cancer who have had their tumors completely removed by surgery may be eligible to join.
- The study is sponsored by NCI (National Cancer Institute) and GlaxoSmithKline (maker of lapatinib), and is being coordinated by TBCI (The Breast Cancer Intergroup of North America) and BIG (Breast International Group).

### BETH for Breast Cancer

- BETH (BEvacizumab and Trastuzumab Adjuvant Therapy in HER2-positive breast cancer) is an international, randomized, phase III clinical trial that is investigating the benefits of combining two monoclonal antibodies (bevacizumab/Avastin® and trastuzumab/Herceptin®), together with chemotherapy for the treatment of patients with early stage HER2-positive breast cancer or high risk node-negative breast cancer.
- The BETH study will enroll 3,500 participants.
- The primary outcome measure will be invasive disease-free survival; secondary endpoints include disease-free survival, overall survival, safety, and tolerability.
- The study was developed by NSABP (National Surgical Adjuvant Breast and Bowel Project) and CIRG (Cancer International Research Group).

### Resources

- *Breast Cancer Facts and Figures*, [www.coloradocancercoalition.org/task/documents/BCFF0708Final.pdf](http://www.coloradocancercoalition.org/task/documents/BCFF0708Final.pdf)
- *Colorado Breast Cancer Resource Directory*, published by Colorado Cancer Coalition Breast Cancer Task Force, is available online at [www.breastcancercolorado.org/](http://www.breastcancercolorado.org/). You can also contact CCRP to request a hard copy of the directory.