

# BUILDING EQUAL ACCESS TOGETHER IN CANCER (BEAT-C) NEWSLETTER



December 2024

## STUDY PROGRESS HIGHLIGHTS

A total of **322** patients have enrolled in the study so far. The table to the right shows enrolled patients by cancer type.

## RESOURCE SPOTLIGHT

The Smith Center for Healing and the Arts is currently accepting new patients for **free mental health therapy** (10-12 sessions) for cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers living in DC, Maryland, or Virginia.

To learn more, please contact [erin@smithcenter.org](mailto:erin@smithcenter.org).

Cancer Type	Number of participants
Breast	153
Prostate	96
Endometrial/Gynecologic	26
Gastrointestinal	25
Respiratory	9
Head and Neck	8
Other	5

## SEXUAL HEALTH IN SURVIVORSHIP

**Sexual health** is often impacted by cancer treatment. You should not hesitate to bring these concerns up with your oncologist if you are bothered by these symptoms. They are here to help!

### Men's Sexual Health

The nerves that allow an erection are often affected in patients who have surgery or radiation therapy for prostate cancer. Erectile dysfunction after prostate cancer treatment is very common. An estimated 50% to 90% of patients may have severe erectile dysfunction after treatment. Oral treatments such as Viagra or Cialis may help restore function after treatment, but they are not always effective. Other treatment options include a vacuum assist device, medications that are inserted into the urethra, injections, and a prosthetic implant. If you are struggling with severe erectile dysfunction, it is important to bring it up with your urologist – they are here to help you figure out a solution.

### Women's Sexual Health

Chemotherapy, hormone therapy, and radiation therapy can all cause decreased levels of the hormone estrogen. Low estrogen levels may lead to symptoms such as hot flashes, irregular periods or no periods, and vaginal dryness. Chemotherapy and radiation can also affect vaginal tissue, leading to symptoms such as weak or less elastic vaginal muscles, itching, burning, and inflammation, which can cause pain and discomfort during sex. Treatments such as vaginal gels or creams, lubricants, dilators, and exercises to strengthen the pelvic muscles may help to make sex more comfortable. Talking with your oncologist about your symptoms can help them understand the side effects of your cancer treatment and recommend solutions for these symptoms.