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NYU Langone partners with cancer site to tackle health inequities

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NYU Langone's Perlmutter Cancer Center has partnered with Soho-based cancer education resource SurvivorNet to launch a media vertical dedicated to addressing health disparities among racial minorities, the groups announced Tuesday.

The initiative, titled "Close the Gap," provides health statistics and medical counseling about cancer for communities of color on SurvivorNet's website. It also includes documentaries, anecdotes and articles that seek to raise awareness of health outcome disparities for people of color.

"What we're trying to do here is close the information gap," said Steve Alperin, co-founder and CEO of SurvivorNet. Patients who have poor access to information about their condition have been shown to fare worse, he added.

The two organizations had collaborated on cancer patient education in the past two years, and about a year ago conversations focused around collaborating to tackle health inequities, Alperin said.

"When I learned a Black woman who gets breast cancer in America is 39% more likely to die from it than a white woman, I thought, There must be something we can do help improve that situation," he said.

"Our mission is to bring visionary thinking and compassionate care to the science of treating cancer," said Dr. Benjamin Neel, director of Perlmutter Cancer Center.

The collaboration aligns with NYU's Stamp Out Cancer Brooklyn initiative, which similarly focuses on public education, he added.

SurvivorNet estimates it will spend more than \$1 million on the campaign. NYU does not have any financial commitment to the effort, Alperin noted.

Hopefully, the campaign can reach about 3 million viewers this year, Alperin said. "If 'Close the Gap' can help communities of color even consider going for screening earlier, or if it helps people tackle the shame of seeking care when diagnosed, I would consider our efforts successful," he said.

SurvivorNet was founded in 2018 and has about 3 million visitors a month. The company raised \$10 million in a Series B round in January 2020, and its revenue is supported by premium targeted advertising, Alperin said. Its revenue is undisclosed. —Shuan Sim