

Ms. Raquel Regalado, Board Member

SUBJECT: OVARIAN CANCER AWARENESS

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

LINK TO STRATEGIC BLUEPRINT: INFORMED, ENGAGED AND EMPOWERED STAKEHOLDERS

September is National Ovarian Cancer Awareness Month and groups around the country will wear the color teal to bring awareness to this tragic disease. The American Cancer Society estimates that each year in the United States nearly 21,290 women will be diagnosed with ovarian cancer and about 14,180 women will die from this disease. According to data collected by the Florida Cancer Data System, in Florida in the years 2011-2013, the average annual number of new cases of ovarian cancer was 1,395 and the average annual number of deaths from this type of cancer was 965. In Miami-Dade County in that same three-year period, the average annual number of new cases was 177 and the average annual number of deaths was 104.

As with all types of cancer, ovarian cancer starts due to out-of-control growth of abnormal cells and early detection is key to saving lives. When detected at its earliest stage, about 94 percent of patients live longer than 5 years after diagnosis; but unfortunately, many women are not diagnosed until the disease has begun to spread beyond the ovaries.

Accounting for more deaths than any other cancer of the female reproductive system, a woman's risk of getting ovarian cancer during her lifetime is about 1 in 75 and her lifetime risk of dying from ovarian cancer is about 1 in 100. This risk increases with age with half of all ovarian cancers found in women 63 years of age or older. A family history of ovarian and other types of cancer can also increase this risk due to inherited mutations (changes) in the BRCA genes as well as other genes that have not yet been identified.

Once called "The Silent Killer," ovarian cancer can present symptoms that are often subtle and easily confused with other illnesses. These symptoms include bloating, trouble eating or feeling full quickly, pelvic or abdominal pain, urinary urgency or frequency, increased fatigue, nausea, indigestion, gas, constipation or diarrhea, menstrual changes, backaches, and shortness of breath. When these symptoms are present daily for more than a few weeks, women are advised to report them to their health care provider immediately.

The number of females staffed by Miami-Dade County Public Schools totals 29,133 and it is of vital importance to educate our workforce regarding the symptoms and diagnosis of ovarian cancer and to consider participating in a study with The University of Miami Health System (UHealth) that will contribute to research about this type of cancer.

This item is proposed in memory of Marisol Perez-Picon, my former employee who was diagnosed with stage 4 ovarian cancer in 2010 and died in 2012. Marisol, like many women focused on taking care of her family and her career, neglected her personal health. By the time she was diagnosed, the cancer had spread and chemotherapy and radiation could only do so much. During her battle with cancer, Marisol found support from other M-DCPS cancer survivors. On a personal note, I have agreed in Marisol's honor to participate in the UHealth study on ovarian cancer.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY
MS. RAQUEL REGALADO:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, through the Superintendent, determine best practices in educating our workforce about ovarian cancer and consider participating in a study with The University of Miami Health System (UHealth) about this type of cancer.