



**Susan G. Komen  
Research Grants – Fiscal Year 2014**

This research grant was approved by Komen's national board of directors for FY2014 Research Programs funding. This grant will be funded upon the execution of grant agreements between Komen and the grantee institutions.

**Graduate training program in breast cancer disparities at UTSPH**

**Investigator(s):** Sally Vernon, Ph.D.

**Lead Organization:** University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston

**Grant Mechanism:** Graduate Training in Disparities Research Grants      **Grant ID:** GTDR14300827

---

**Public Abstract:**

Goals of the training program The goal of the training program is to train a new cadre of innovative and highly skilled researchers and practitioners, preferably from populations who are disproportionately affected by breast cancer, who are committed to the elimination of breast cancer disparities. The program will encourage the brightest master and doctoral students at the University of Texas School of Public Health (UTSPH) to pursue careers as researchers or public health practitioners focusing on breast cancer disparities. The program will provide trainees (the students in the training program) with the necessary skills needed to successfully reduce breast cancer disparities by offering a rigorous specialized training program that includes formal coursework and mentored research and practice experiences. Patient advocates are an integral part of the training program and will mentor the trainees and provide the patient perspective. The training program will focus on critical problems that contribute to disparities in breast cancer. UTSPH is a good environment for this training program because it has excellent research, computer, and library facilities. It also has excellent faculty who are interested in reducing breast cancer disparities and currently do state of the art research. It also has many students from minority and poor backgrounds, who could be trained to reduce breast cancer disparities in their communities. We expect all trainees graduating from the training program to engage in a research or practice career that contributes meaningfully to reductions in breast cancer disparities. Importance of this program to patients with breast cancer This program is important to patients with breast cancer because many patients with breast cancer are women of color and women with fewer socioeconomic resources. These disadvantaged patients tend to be diagnosed with more advanced breast cancer, to be sicker, and to have more problems obtaining good quality care. Because of these and other reasons, they are more likely to die of breast cancer than breast cancer patients who are advantaged because they have more resources. It is very important for the disadvantaged patients that researchers understand exactly why they have worse survival than more advantaged patients and what can be done to eliminate these differences in breast cancer survival. That is why we need to train researchers and practitioners, preferably from disadvantaged backgrounds, who are committed to eliminating breast cancer disparities in their communities and among all breast cancer patients. Patient advocates are part of the mentoring team to ensure that the program focuses on the patient perspective. Our goal is that students who graduate from the program focus their careers on the elimination of breast cancer disparities so that breast cancer patients of color and of low socioeconomic status get the same quality treatment and survival as more advantaged patients.