The University of Arizona Cancer Center, through its Office of Community Outreach and Engagement, is launching a series of town halls across the state to engage communities in the policy-making process to improve cancer prevention and control in Arizona.

Town halls will be held at five locations throughout the state beginning Oct. 14 and continuing into spring 2020. The first event — UACC North Central/East Arizona Cancer Policy Town Hall — will be held on Monday, Oct. 14, from 6-7:30 p.m., at the Northern Arizona Native American Cultural Center in Flagstaff, 318 W. McCreary Drive, 86011.

The inaugural town hall will be co-facilitated by Omar A. Contreras, DrPh, MPH, UA Cancer Center program director of policy and translational research, and Heather Carter, EdD, Arizona State Sen. LD 15, and associate director, Arizona Center for Rural Health.

"Communities across Arizona exhibit a higher burden of certain types of cancer than others," Dr. Contreras said. "Data indicate that cancer disparities continue to prevail among underserved and under-resourced communities, as well as members of racial and ethnic groups. For example, the Hispanic/Latino community has a higher mortality rate from prostate cancer than white non-Hispanics. Mortality data also indicate that African Americans are more likely to die from colorectal cancer compared to white non-Hispanics. The cancer policy town halls are a gateway to bridging the quantitative data with community personal narratives — two key pillars on informing and shaping policy at the state level."

The town halls seek to build a critical narrative among state policymakers and legislators regarding the cancer burden in Arizona, continued funding for biomedical and community-engaged research, as well as elevating the visibility of the UA Cancer Center as a statewide beacon for cancer prevention, treatment, research and survivorship.

"The cancer policy town halls are pivotal and align with the UA Cancer Center's mission to prevent and cure cancer," said Jennifer Hatcher, PhD, associate director for community outreach and engagement. "Policy town halls are platforms to better understand the needs and assets of Arizona communities impacted by cancer and engage in a dialogue with state elected officials and policymakers regarding cancer priorities and resources to aim for a cancer-free Arizona."

The UACC North Central/East Arizona Cancer Policy Town Hall is free to attend, but seating is limited. To RSVP, please visit uacc-townhall-flagstaff.eventbrite.com. Refreshments and food will be provided.

Additional town halls will be scheduled next spring in Kingman, Phoenix, Tucson and Yuma. The three latter events will be conducted in English and Spanish. The series will help in the planning process of the UA Cancer Center Policy Summit, slated for summer 2020 in
Phoenix. The summit will bring cancer and policy subject matter experts across the nation to provide the scientific community and general public with best-practices and tools to effectively engage in the public policymaking process.

**About the University of Arizona Cancer Center**

The University of Arizona Cancer Center is the only National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Center with headquarters in Arizona. The UA Cancer Center is supported by NCI Cancer Center Support Grant No. CA023074. With primary locations at the University of Arizona in Tucson and at Dignity Health St. Joseph’s Hospital and Medical Center in Phoenix, the UA Cancer Center has more than a dozen research and education offices throughout the state, with more than 300 physicians and scientists working together to prevent and cure cancer. For more information: [uacc.arizona.edu](http://uacc.arizona.edu) (Follow us: [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/arizonacancercenter) / [Twitter](https://twitter.com/AZCancerCenter) / [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/user/arizonacancercenter))

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