



Engaging Former NFL Players to Drive Colorectal Cancer Awareness and Screening Among Black Men *From Awareness to Action in Cancer Prevention*

**Presentation to the
National Conference on Health Communication, Marketing, and Media
Monday, July 28, 2025**

Presenters:

Janet Marchibroda, MBA, National Football League Alumni Association

Nikki Hayes, MPH, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Objectives

1. Provide an Overview of the Gear Up Against Cancer Program
2. Share Preliminary Findings
3. Discuss Next Steps
4. Questions and Answers

About Colorectal Cancer

1. Colorectal cancer (CRC) is the third leading cause of cancer-related death among men in the U.S.
2. Disproportionately affects Black men, who experience higher incidence rates, higher mortality rates, and lower screening use compared to other groups.
3. CRC screening reduces cancer incidence and mortality rates by removing precancerous lesions before they turn into cancer and detecting cancers early.
4. Barriers to CRC screening include limited awareness of screening guidelines, medical distrust, lack of culturally relevant outreach, fear or discomfort with screening procedures, lack of symptoms, access issues, and time constraints.
5. Addressing these challenges through targeted education and outreach can improve CRC outcomes in all men, including Black men.

Overview of Gear Up Against Cancer Campaign

1. Collaboration between National Football League (NFL) Alumni Association (NFL Alumni), Tanaq Health, and CDC's Division of Cancer Control and Prevention
2. Includes a multimedia health communications campaign as well as community engagement activities, an innovative model for effectively reaching target audiences, including men.
3. Unique partnership between public health and professional athletes (former NFL players) who are serving as “trusted messengers” to increase awareness and engagement among men with the goal of preventing disease and improving health outcomes

GEAR UP Against Cancer Program

- **Launched the GEAR UP Against Cancer Program with focus on increasing colorectal cancer awareness and engaging males in community conversations on surviving cancer in first year**
- **Overall Goal:** Increase awareness with target audiences primarily in Nashville and Atlanta in its first year:
 - For prevention and early detection: males, primarily between the ages of 45 and 64
 - For survivorship: males of any age and their caregivers
- **Objectives**
 - Increase awareness of the impact of colorectal cancer and the benefits of and need for regular screening among target audiences
 - Engage and better understand the needs of survivors representing target audiences, through town halls and/or listening sessions, and help refer them to services as appropriate, in each of the two markets

Campaign Elements

1. Digital Assets That Share Key Messages and Highlight Personal Experiences
2. Social Media from NFL Alumni, Partner and Individual Player Accounts Highlighting Key Messages and Digital Assets
3. Paid Media (Boosting of Organic Social Media Posts)
4. Campaign Website
3. Events in the Community (Listening Sessions and Educational Events)
4. Earned Media Outreach

Project Collaborators

- Janet Marchibroda, MBA, National Football League Alumni Association (NFL Alumni)
- Al Smith, M. Ed, NFL Alumni
- Nikki Hayes, MPH, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Virginia Kincaid, MPH, CDC
- Erin Stair, MD, MPH, Tanaq Health
- Charles Williams, MPH, MA, Tanaq Health

About National Football League Alumni Association

- Founded in 1967 by a small group of successful retired NFL players, the National Football League Alumni Association (NFL Alumni) is the oldest and most well-known retired player organization
- NFL Alumni has both a 501(c)5 and 501(c) 3 organization
- 40 Chapters across the U.S.
- Our Mission:
 - ✓ Caring for Kids
 - ✓ Caring for the Community
 - ✓ Caring for Our Own (through the Association)



NFL Alumni's Approach to Supporting Communities

▪ Overall Goal:

Improve the health and wellbeing of individuals within communities across the United States

▪ Our Approach:

- ✓ Engage retired NFL players to serve as ambassadors
- ✓ Raise awareness of the importance of the issue through social media, earned media, paid media, web presence, and events in the community—featuring NFL Alumni Ambassadors as spokespersons
- ✓ Host public education events that also bring health services and information to target populations, in collaboration with trusted community organizations
- ✓ Host listening sessions to engage, educate, and gain input from the community to improve collective efforts and community impact
- ✓ Measure results to evaluate impact and drive ongoing improvements and stronger results

More than 30 Former Players Have Served as Ambassadors for Cancer Campaign to Date

GEORGIA

- **Chris Draft**, Former Linebacker, Chicago Bears, San Francisco 49'ers, Atlanta Falcons, Carolina Panthers, St. Louis Rams, Buffalo Bills
- **Warrick Dunn**, Former Atlanta Falcons Pro Bowl Running Back and Falcons Ring of Honor Member
- **Brian Jordan**, Former Atlanta Falcons Safety and MLB All-Star Outfielder for the Atlanta Braves
- **Perry Kemp**, Former Wide Receiver, Green Bay Packers, President of NFL Alumni Georgia Chapter
- **Terance Mathis**, Former Atlanta Falcons All-Pro Receiver and Head Football Coach at Morehouse College

LOUISIANA

- **Bobby Hebert**, Former Pro Bowl Quarterback, New Orleans Saints, and Member, New Orleans Saints Hall of Fame
- **Deuce McAllister**, Former Pro Bowl Running Back, New Orleans Saints and Member, New Orleans Saints Hall of Fame, Super Bowl Champion

More than 30 Former Players Have Served as Ambassadors for Cancer Campaign to Date

TENNESSEE

- **Blaine Bishop**, Former Tennessee Titans Pro Bowl Safety
- **Kevin Dyson**, Former Tennessee Titans Wide Receiver
- **Albert Haynesworth**, Former Tennessee Titans Pro Bowl Defensive Tackle
- **Brad Hopkins**, Former Tennessee Titans and Houston Oilers, Pro Bowl, All-Pro Offensive Tackle
- **Chris Johnson**, Former Tennessee Titans Pro Bowl Running Back
- **Jevon Kearse**, Former Tennessee Titans All-Pro Defensive End
- **Derrick Mason**, Former Tennessee Titans Pro Bowl Wide Receiver
- **Warren Moon**, Member, Pro Football Hall of Fame, Former All-Pro Quarterback, Houston Oilers and Tennessee Titans Ring of Honor Member
- **Jarrett Payton**, Former Tennessee Titans Running Back
- **Al Smith**, Former Houston Oilers All-Pro Linebacker and Lead Ambassador, NFL Alumni
- **Lendale White**, Former Tennessee Titans Running Back

More than 30 Former Players Have Served as Ambassadors for Cancer Campaign to Date

OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY

- **Steve Atwater**, Member of Pro Football Hall of Fame, All-Pro, Pro Bow Safety, Denver Broncos and New York Jets, Super Bowl Champion
- **Pat Carter**, Former Tight End, LA Rams, Houston Oilers, St. Louis Rams, and Arizona Cardinals
- **Eric Dickerson**, Member, Pro Football Hall of Fame, Former All-Pro, Pro Bowl Running Back, LA Rams and Indianapolis Colts
- **Brad Edwards**, Former Washington Redskins All-Pro Safety, CEO, NFL Alumni
- **Randy Grimes**, Former Tampa Bay Buccaneers Center
- **Bernie Kosar**, Former Pro Bowl Quarterback, Cleveland Browns, Miami Dolphins, and Dallas Cowboys, Super Bowl Champion
- **Brian Mitchell**, Former All-Pro, Pro Bowl Return Specialist, Washington Redskins, Philadelphia Eagles and New York Giants

More than 30 Former Players Have Served as Ambassadors for Cancer Campaign to Date

OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTRY (continued)

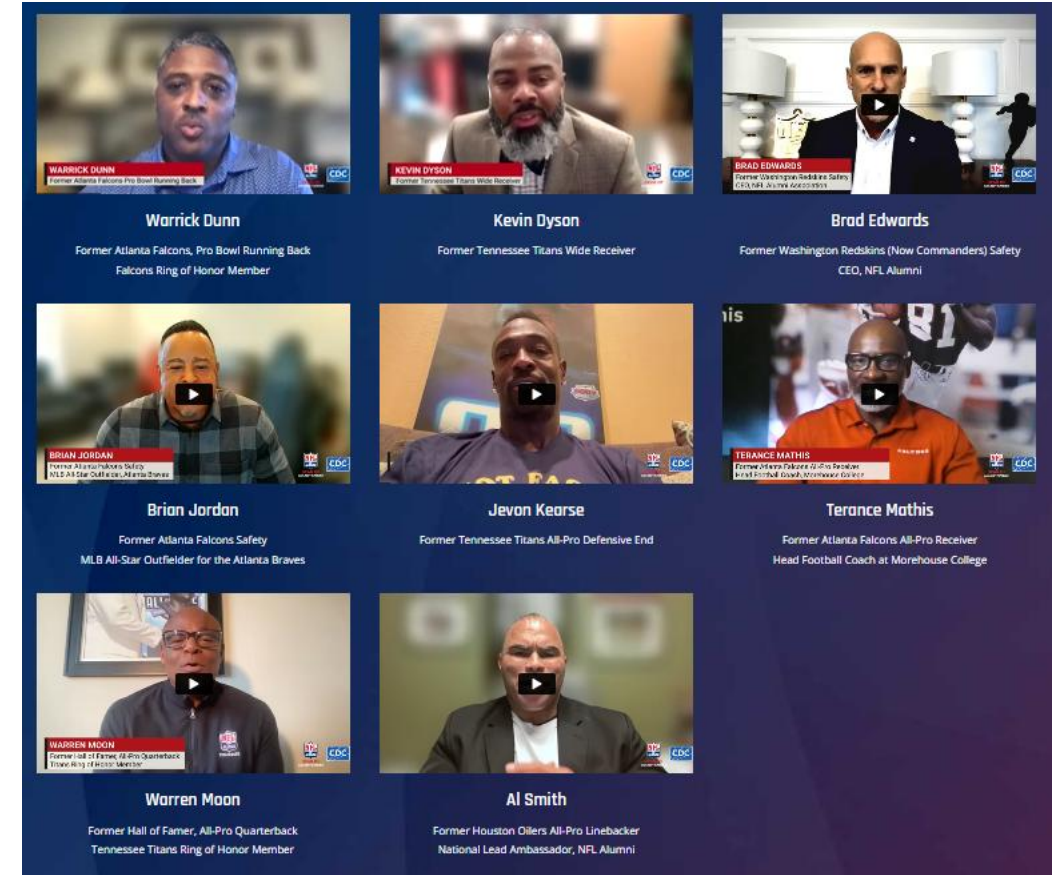
- **Lorenzo Neal**, Former All-Pro Pro Bowl Fullback, New Orleans Saints, Tampa Bay, Tennessee Titans, San Diego Chargers, Baltimore Ravens
- **Roman Oben**, Former Offensive Tackle, New York Giants, Tampa Bay, Cleveland Browns, Super Bowl Champion, President of the NFL Alumni NY/NJ Chapter
- **Tracy Porter**, Former Wide Receiver, Detroit Lions, Baltimore/Indianapolis Colts, Chairman of the Board, NFL Alumni
- **Andre Reed**, Member, Pro Football Hall of Fame, Former All-Pro, Pro Bowl Receiver, Buffalo Bills, Washington Redskins
- **Will Shield**, Member, Pro Football Hall of Fame, Former All-Pro, Pro Bowl Guard, Kansas City Chiefs
- **Solomon Wilcots**, Former Safety, Cincinnati Bengals, Minnesota Vikings, Pittsburgh Steelers

Recap Campaign Elements

1. **Digital Assets** That Share Key Messages and Highlight Personal Experiences
2. **Social Media** from NFL Alumni, Partner and Individual Player Accounts Highlighting Key Messages and Digital Assets
3. **Paid Media** (Boosting of Organic Social Media Posts)
4. Campaign **Website**
3. **Events** in the Community (Listening Sessions and Educational Events)
4. **Earned Media** Outreach

Digital Assets: Retired NFL Players Share Key Messages via PSAs Using Messages Developed in Collaboration with CDC

- Hi, I'm INSERT NAME, POSITION, TEAM
- Did you know that colorectal cancer is a leading cause of cancer death in the United States.
- And unlike some other cancers, you don't always have symptoms.
- But colorectal cancer can be prevented or found early through regular screening.
- It takes a strong defense to win games.
- And regular screenings are the best defense to prevent or detect cancer and save lives.
- There are several screening options, including some that can be done at home.
- If you're over 45, it's time to GEAR UP!
- Talk to your doctor and schedule a screening today.



Digital Assets: Retired NFL Players Share Personal Insights Using Questions Developed in Collaboration with CDC

1. **23 Former NFL Players Shared Their Personal Insights on Cancer**
2. **Questions Developed in Collaboration with CDC:**
 - a. How has your life been impacted by cancer?
 - b. Why do you feel it is important to stay on top of cancer screenings?
 - c. What did your time in the NFL teach you about the importance of staying on top of your health?
 - d. Have you ever had a colonoscopy or otherwise been screened for colorectal cancer?
 - What was your experience like?
 - What would you say to anyone who might be apprehensive?

Digital Assets: Retired NFL Players Share Personal Insights



STEVE ATWATER

Former All-Pro, Pro Bowl Safety, Denver Broncos and New York Jets, Super Bowl Champion, Member, Pro Football Hall of Fame



PAT CARTER

Former Tight End, LA Rams, Houston Oilers, St. Louis Rams, and Arizona Cardinals



DUANE CLEMONS

Former Defensive End, Minnesota Vikings, Kansas City Chiefs, and Cincinnati Bengals



KEVIN DYSON

Former Tennessee Titans Wide Receiver



BRAD EDWARDS

Former Washington Redskins (Now Commanders) Safety
CEO, NFL Alumni



RANDY GRIMES

Former Center, Tampa Bay Buccaneers



ERIC DICKERSON

Former All-Pro, Pro Bowl Running Back, LA Rams and Indianapolis Colts
Member, Pro Football Hall of Fame



CHRIS DRAFT

Former Linebacker, Chicago Bears, San Francisco 49ers, Atlanta Falcons, Carolina Panthers, St. Louis Rams, and Buffalo Bills



WARRICK DUNN

Former Atlanta Falcons, Pro Bowl Running Back
Falcons Ring of Honor Member



BRIAN JORDAN

Former Atlanta Falcons Safety
MLB All-Star Outfielder for the Atlanta Braves



JEVON KEARSE

Former Tennessee Titans All-Pro Defensive End



BERNIE KOSAR

Former Pro Bowl Quarterback, Cleveland Browns, Dallas Cowboys, and Miami Dolphins, Super Bowl Champion

<https://nflgearup.org/cancer/what-players-are-saying/>

Digital Assets: Retired NFL Players Share Personal Insights



TERANCE MATHIS

Former Atlanta Falcons All-Pro Receiver
Head Football Coach at Morehouse College



BRIAN MITCHELL

Former All-Pro, Pro Bowl Return Specialist
Washington Redskins, Philadelphia Eagles, and NY Giants
Super Bowl Champion



WARREN MOON

Former Hall of Famer, All-Pro Quarterback
Tennessee Titans Ring of Honor Member



ANDRE REED

Former All-Pro, Pro Bowl Wide Receiver, Buffalo Bills,
Washington Redskins
Member, Pro Football Hall of Fame



WILL SHIELDS

Former All-Pro, Pro Bowl Guard, Kansas City Chiefs
Member, Pro Football Hall of Fame



AL SMITH

Former Houston Oilers All-Pro Linebacker
National Lead Ambassador, NFL Alumni



LORENZO NEAL

Former All-Pro, Pro Bowl Fullback, New Orleans Saints, NY
Jets, Tampa Bay, Tennessee Titans, San Diego Chargers,
Baltimore Ravens



ROMAN OBEN

Former Offensive Tackle, NY Giants, Tampa Bay, and
Cleveland Browns
Super Bowl Champion
President, NFL Alumni NY/NJ Chapter



JARRETT PAYTON

Former Running Back, Tennessee Titans



LENDALE WHITE

Former Running Back, Tennessee Titans and Denver
Broncos

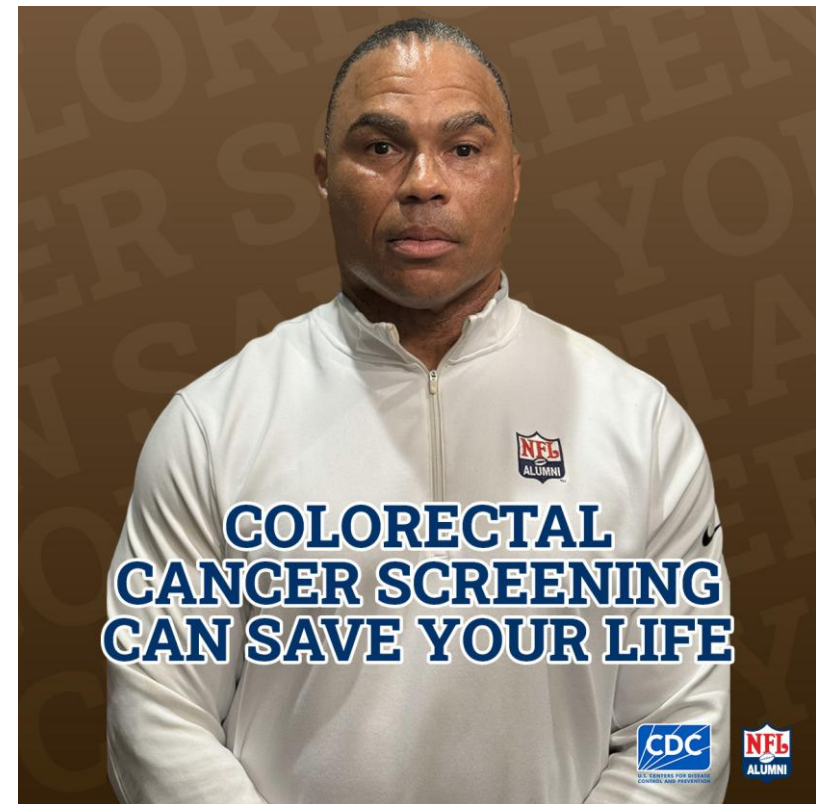
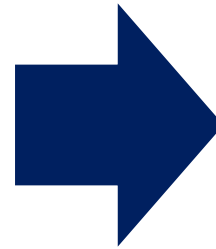


SOLOMON WILCOTS

Former Safety, Cincinnati Bengals, Minnesota Vikings, and
Pittsburgh Steelers

<https://nflgearup.org/cancer/what-players-are-saying/>

Digital Assets: Leveraged Design and Messaging of CDC-Developed Assets for the Campaign



Digital Assets: Event “Sizzle” Reels and Video Podcasts

Educational Event



Sample of Videos Recorded with Experts and Players



Ctrl + Click to Listen to Videos

Organic Social Media Results

# Posts	# Posts	Impressions	Engagements	Likes
NFL Alumni Channels	81	868,552	2,475	1,987
Player and Partner Channels	67	443,452	6,568	6,227
Grand Total	148	1,312,004	9,043	8,214

1.3M Organic Impressions



nflalumni · Follow
Original audio

nflalumni · 3w
Former NFL players and @NFLAlumni Ambassadors talk about the best way to prevent colorectal cancer, a leading cause of cancer death. If you're 45 or older, don't put it off. Talk to your doctor and get screened. It could save your life! #GearUpAgainstCancer @cdcgov

bipocdoc · 3w
This is awesome 🙌🙌
Reply

bipocdoc · 3w
Also agreed! And for us Black folks,

Community Conversation on Surviving Cancer
Hosted by LSU Health New Orleans | Human Development Center
411 S. Poydras Street, New Orleans, LA 70112
FREE PARKING, RESERVATIONS STRIKED

Wednesday, March 19, 2025 - 6:30pm to 7:30pm

LSU Health New Orleans | Human Development Center
411 S. Poydras Street, New Orleans, LA 70112

Chancellor Duane, MD
LSU Health New Orleans

Dr. Robert Porter, MD, MPH
Chief, Division of Cancer Control and Prevention
National Cancer Institute

Dr. Deuce McAllister
Former NFL Player

Dr. Tracy R. Porter
Former NFL Player

Al Smith
Former NFL Player

Doree L. Williams, MS, MPH, DrPH
Associate Professor, School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine
LSU Health New Orleans

Ruth Williams, MD
Chief, Division of Cancer Control and Prevention
National Cancer Institute

This event will bring together community members, cancer survivors, caregivers, cancer prevention and control experts, health care providers, and retired NFL players who have been touched by cancer to explore existing challenges and potential opportunities for supporting cancer survivors and caregivers in our communities.

This activity is part of the NFL Alumni GEAR UP Against Cancer program conducted in collaboration with CDC.

We're inviting cancer survivors to please register at <https://bit.ly/nfla0319cancer>

REGISTER
<https://bit.ly/nfla0319cancer>



nflalumni · Follow
Original audio

nflalumni Edited · 17w
March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Hear why Hall of Famer, @ericdickerson29 is advocating for early screenings and what this mission means to him.
#colorectalcancerawareness
#GearUpAgainstCancer @nflalumni @cdcgov

blackwellwillie · 17w
👍👍 AMEN!
Reply

sylviasboswell7 · 1w
Yes guys please,
Reply

charlesfullerjr72 · 15w
13 likes
March 19

Messages

nflalumni · Follow
Original audio

nflalumni Edited · 17w
March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Hear why Hall of Famer, @ericdickerson29 is advocating for early screenings and what this mission means to him.
#colorectalcancerawareness
#GearUpAgainstCancer @nflalumni @cdcgov

blackwellwillie · 17w
👍👍 AMEN!
Reply

sylviasboswell7 · 1w
Yes guys please,
Reply

108 likes
March 7



nflalumni · Follow
Original audio

nflalumni · 29w
It's time to #GearUpAgainstCancer! Join NFL legends @warrenmoon1 @alsmith5454 @mykarseismygift @tdyson27 @warwickdunn @officelanganjordan33 and @teranecmathis as we team up with @cdcgov to tackle colorectal cancer!

Early detection saves lives, especially for Black and Latino men at higher risk. Visit nflagearup.org/cancer to learn more and take action. Together, we can save lives! #NFLAlumni #CDC #ColorectalCancerAwareness #NFLATennessee #NFLAlumniGeorgia

majelminkins · 29w
37 likes
December 11, 2024

Messages

WARRICK DUNN
Former Atlanta Falcons Pro Bowl Running Back

mykarseismygift · 23w
750 likes
January 23

Paid Digital Results

Overall, the amplification of Chapter and Player content on social resulted in 25.2M impressions, 277k engagements, 247k link clicks to site and 3.1M video views between December 12, 2024 and June 30, 2025.

25.2M+

Total Social Impressions

277K+

Social Engagements

3.08M+

3s Video Views

\$2.66

CPM

1.10%

Engagement Rate

\$0.24

Cost Per Engagement

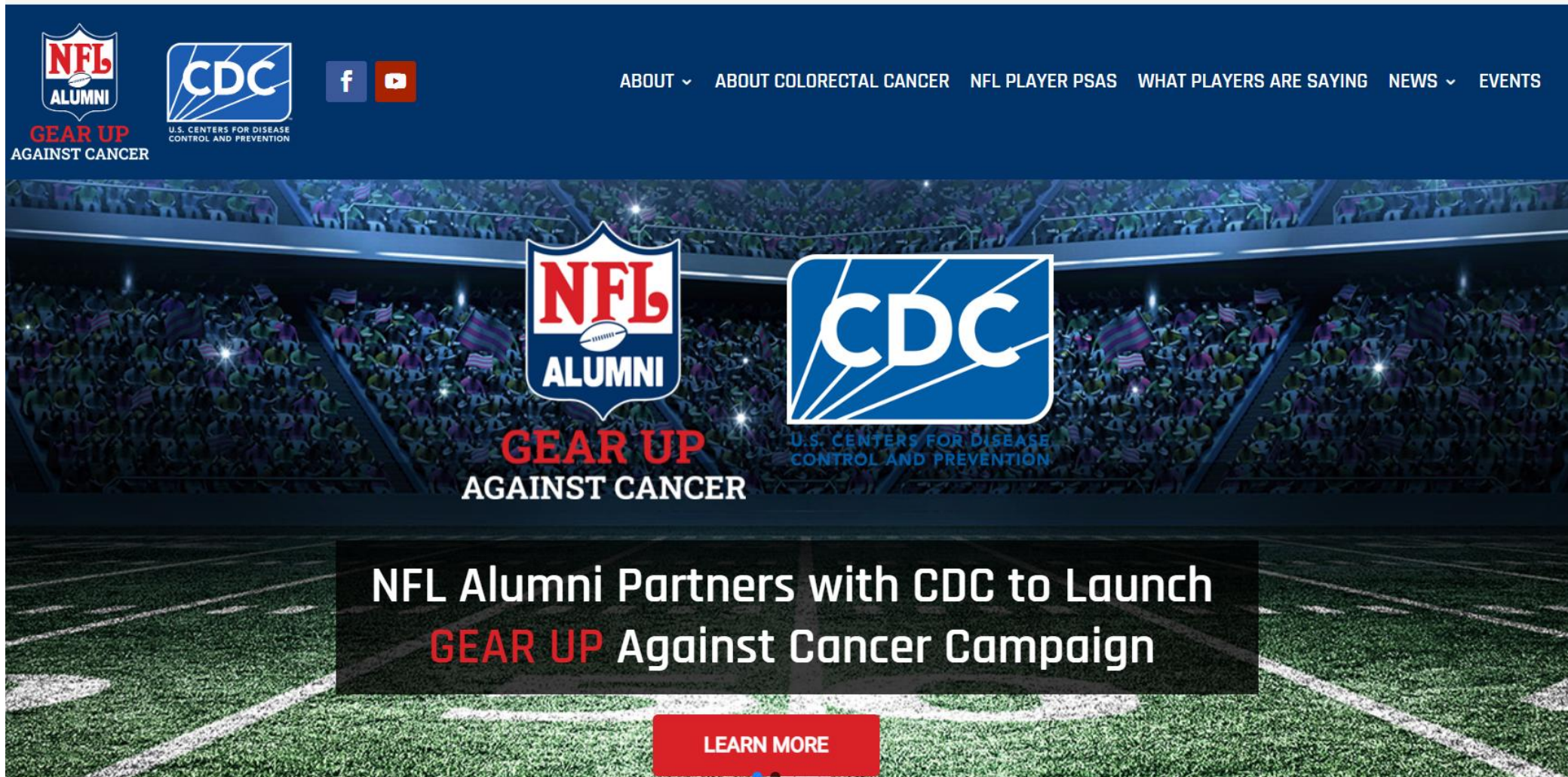
Paid Digital Results



Channel	Spend	Imp.	CPM	Link Clicks	Eng.	ER	CPE	3s Video Views
NFLA Owned Channels	\$28,500.00	19,545,851	\$1.46	12,833	16,309	0.08%	\$1.75	1,120,999
Player Boosts	\$38,499.99	5,660,574	\$6.80	234,018	261,152	4.61%	\$0.15	1,964,904
TOTAL	\$66,999.99	25,206,425	\$2.66	246,851	277,461	1.10%	\$0.24	3,085,903

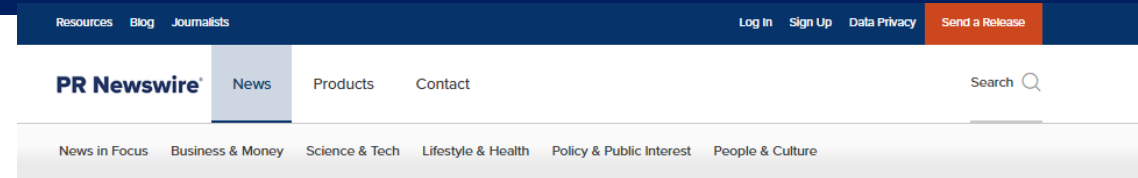
Campaign Website Launched in December 2025

<https://nflagearup.org/cancer/>



Earned Media: Issued Release Over the Wire in Conjunction with Launch

569 Media Hits
112.6M Impressions



FORMER NFL STARS PARTNER WITH THE CDC TO LAUNCH "GEAR UP AGAINST CANCER" CAMPAIGN



NEWS PROVIDED BY
NFL Alumni Association →
Dec 11, 2024, 11:00 ET



NFL Alumni to raise awareness, importance of screening for colorectal cancer—a leading cause of cancer death in the U.S.—in Georgia and Tennessee

ATLANTA and NASHVILLE, Tenn., Dec. 11, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- The [National Football League Alumni Association](#) (NFL Alumni) and the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC) Division of Cancer Prevention and Control have kicked off the "GEAR UP Against Cancer" campaign in Georgia and Tennessee. The initiative aims to raise awareness about the impact of colorectal cancer, emphasize the importance of regular screenings, and create a deeper understanding of the unique needs of cancer survivors.

According to the CDC, colorectal cancer is a leading cause of cancer death among men and women in the United States. In 2022, the latest year for which incidence data are available, 52,967 people died from colorectal cancer in the United States. Statistics also show that [Black and Latino men are at higher risk of being diagnosed](#) with colorectal cancer. Regular screenings can find polyps, or abnormal growths, before they turn into cancer, or find cancer early, when treatment works best.

In its first year, the campaign will feature former Atlanta Falcons in Atlanta and former Tennessee Titans in Nashville who will conduct outreach and education about prevention and the need for screening through social media, earned media, and community events and also gain important input from and provide support to cancer survivors. The campaign will be expanded to four additional markets in late 2025.

Campaign ambassadors include, former Falcons running back [Warrick Dunn](#), former Falcons safety [Brian Jordan](#), former Falcons All-Pro Receiver and current Morehouse College head football coach [Terance Mathis](#), Hall of Famer All-Pro quarterback and Titans Ring of

Earned Media: Leveraging Super Bowl Radio Row Expanded Our Reach

Leveraging Super Bowl Radio Row enabled us to significantly increase the number of individuals within our target audience that hear Program messages related to colorectal cancer screening:

1. The Super Bowl—and the days leading up to it—are one of the most significant opportunities for reaching a large number of people; for example, Super Bowl broadcasts reached a record of more than 180M unique viewers
2. NFL football—which culminates with the Super Bowl—is of great interest to our target audience
3. During Super Bowl week, Super Bowl Radio Row is set up as a designated area where hundreds of media outlets set up temporary studios and broadcast live programming—all in one place—during the week leading up to Super Bowl, leading to efficiency in outreach.

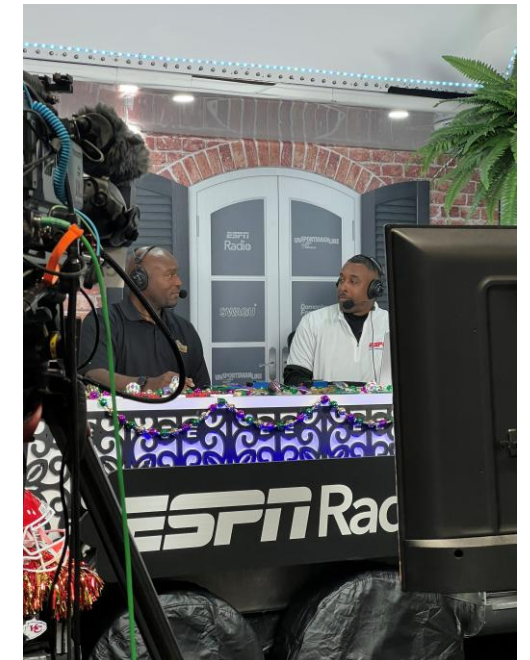
Earned Media: Interviews at Super Bowl Radio Row



**261 Total Media Hits
634.7M Impressions**



**Warren Moon and Will Shields
Were Primary Spokespersons
NFL Alumni CEO Brad Edwards
and NFL Alumni Lead
Ambassador Al Smith Also
Conducted Interviews**



Earned Media Interviews at Super Bowl Radio Row

Sample Media Outlets



During the First 9 Months of the Campaign Achieved More than 770M Impressions

IMPRESSIONS

- Organic Social Media – 1.3M
- Paid Digital – 25.2M
- Earned Media Launch – 112.6M
- Earned Media Super Bowl RR – 634.7M
- Educational Events and Listening Sessions - > 750

**774.8M
Impressions**

Community Conversations on Surviving Cancer New Orleans

1. Worked with Louisiana Colorectal Cancer Control and Comprehensive Cancer Programs (LSU) to plan and host first community listening session
2. Collaborators included NFL Alumni Ambassadors, healthcare providers, and program experts
3. More than 40 community participants

Please Join Us for a
Community Conversation on Surviving Cancer
Hosted by LSU LCMC Health Cancer Center, Louisiana Cancer Prevention and Control Programs, and the National Football League Alumni Association
Wednesday, March 19, 2025 – 5:30pm to 7:30pm
LSU Health New Orleans | Human Development Center
411 S. Prieur Street, New Orleans, LA 70112
FREE PARKING, REFRESHMENTS SERVED

Chancellor Donald, MD
Chief Medical Officer, Taking Aim at Cancer in Louisiana, Assistant Professor of Clinical Medicine, Tulane University School of Medicine, Medical Director, Tulane Cancer Management and Oncology Services, University Medical Center in New Orleans

Billkisu "Reni" Elewonibi PhD, MPH
Assistant Professor, Epidemiology and Population Health and Director, Louisiana Cancer Prevention and Control Programs, Louisiana State University Health Science Center New Orleans School of Public Health

Bobby Hebert
Former Pro Bowl Quarterback, New Orleans Saints and Member, New Orleans Saints Hall of Fame

Deuce McAllister
Former Pro Bowl Running Back, New Orleans Saints and Member Super Bowl Champion

Tracy R. Porter
Former Wide Receiver, Detroit Lions and Baltimore/Indianapolis Colts, Chairman of the Board, NFL Alumni Association

Al Smith
Former All-Pro Pro Bowl Linebacker Houston Oilers, National Lead Ambassador, NFL Alumni Association

Donna L. Williams MS, MPH, DrPH
Director, Louisiana Cancer Prevention and Control, Associate Dean for Public Health Practice, LSU Health New Orleans School of Public Health, Associate Director of Community Outreach & Engagement, LSU LCMC Health Cancer Center

Keith Winfrey, MD
Chief Medical Officer, New Orleans East Louisiana Community Health Center and Assistant Professor of Medicine, Tulane University School of Medicine

This event will bring together community members, cancer survivors, caregivers, cancer prevention and control experts, health care providers, and retired NFL players who have been touched by cancer to explore existing challenges and potential opportunities for supporting cancer survivors and caregivers in our communities.

This activity is part of the NFL Alumni GEAR UP Against Cancer program conducted in collaboration with CDC.

We're inviting cancer survivors to please register at <https://bit.ly/nfla0319cancer>



REGISTER
<https://bit.ly/nfla0319cancer>

Community Conversations on Surviving Cancer Atlanta

NFL ALUMNI GEAR UP AGAINST CANCER CAMPAIGN IS ANNOUNCING
COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ON SURVIVING CANCER

Participants include leadership from the Atlanta East District of the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church and the Beta Lambda Lambda Chapter of Omega Psi Phi Fraternity

Saturday, March 29, 2025 – 10am to 12pm
Antioch AME Church
765 S. Hairston Road, Stone Mountain, GA

Brad Hopkins
Former All-Pro, Pro Bowl Offensive Tackle, Houston Oilers and Tennessee Titans and NFL Alumni Ambassador

Perry Kemp
Former Wide Receiver, Green Bay Packers, NFL Alumni Georgia Chapter President

Terance Mathis
Former All-Pro Receiver, Atlanta Falcons Head Football Coach, Morehouse College

Al Smith
Former All-Pro, Pro Bowl Linebacker, Houston Oilers National Lead Ambassador, NFL Alumni Association

Shonta Chambers, MSW
Executive Vice President, Health Equity Initiatives and Community Engagement Patient Advocate Foundation

F. Edward LeVert, MD
Assistant Professor of Medicine, Department of Digestive Diseases, Co-Interim Clinical Department Director, Service Chief, Emory Saint Joseph's Hospital, Dunwoody ASC Site Director, ESJH Fellowship Program, Emory University

Brian Jordan
Former Safety, Atlanta Falcons MLB All-Star Outfielder, Atlanta Braves

Cindy Snyder
DNP, ACGN, FNP-C, CBCN Director of Clinical and Screening Programs, Advanced Clinical Genomics Nurse Practitioner, Oncology Nurse Navigator, Georgia Center for Oncology Research and Education

To register, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Mar29Cancer> or email janet@nflgearup.org

This event will bring together community members, cancer survivors, caregivers, cancer prevention and control experts, health care providers, and retired NFL players who have been touched by cancer to explore existing challenges and potential opportunities for supporting cancer survivors and caregivers in our communities.

1. Worked with the Georgia Colorectal Cancer Control Program, a local church, and the Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., to plan and host 2nd community listening session.
2. Collaborators included NFL Alumni Ambassadors, healthcare providers, clergy, fraternity members, and program experts
3. More than 50 community participants

Community Conversations on Surviving Cancer Nashville

1. Worked with the Tennessee Comprehensive Cancer Control Program, Meharry Medical College, Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc., and Vanderbilt to plan and host 3rd community listening session.
2. Collaborators included NFL Alumni Ambassadors, healthcare providers, fraternity members, and program experts
3. More than 50 community participants

NFL ALUMNI
GEAR UP
AGAINST CANCER

CDC
CENTERS FOR DISEASE
CONTROL AND PREVENTION

**NFL ALUMNI GEAR UP AGAINST CANCER CAMPAIGN IS ANNOUNCING
COMMUNITY CONVERSATION WITH
MEN ON SURVIVING CANCER**

As Part of the Cancer Survivorship Summit 2025 Hosted by Meharry Medical College

Saturday, April 26, 2025 – Listening Session is from 12pm to 1:30pm

(Note that the Cancer Survivorship Summit Extends From 10am to 2pm)

Meharry Medical College
Cal Turner Family Center for Student Education
1011 21st Avenue North, Nashville, TN 37208

Kevin Dyson
Former NFL Player

Brad Hopkins
Former NFL Player

Derrick Mason
Former NFL Player

AJ Smith
Former NFL Player

Donald J. Alcendor, PhD
Meharry Medical College

Kevin L. Billups, MD, DipABLM
Meharry Medical College

Cathy Eng, MD, FACP, FASCO
Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center

Bryan K. White
25th Fifth District
Omega Psi Phi Fraternity

To register for the 12pm NFL Alumni GEAR UP Against Cancer listening session for cancer survivors, go to <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/April26Cancer> or email janet@nflagearup.org

This event will bring together male cancer survivors, their caregivers, and former NFL players who have been touched by cancer to explore existing challenges and opportunities for supporting cancer survivors and their caregivers in the Nashville community. Physicians and cancer experts will also be on hand to answer questions.

To register as a participant in the Meharry Medical College Cancer Survivorship Summit, which goes from 10am to 2pm, go to <https://redcap.link/survivorshipsummitregistration>



Photo: Mar 19 2025, 7:12:32 PM.dng

Community Conversations on Surviving Cancer

1. Intimate sharing among participants
2. Community partners sharing expertise
3. Lots and lots of questions...
4. Commitment to doing more together



Conclusions

Engaging trusted messengers, such as retired professional athletes, can increase reach to men who may be less likely to visit their doctors and engage in preventive health measures like cancer screening.

Implications for Research and Practice

- This campaign offers a model for using retired professional athletes as trusted messengers in public health efforts aimed at men, including Black men who face disproportionately high rates of CRC and lower CRC screening use.
- Fans often develop a sense of trust and connection with athletes making their personal health stories more relatable and credible.
- By linking preventive care—like CRC screening—to strength, longevity, and performance, the campaign helps reframe CRC screening as a proactive step, not just a medical task.

Thank You!

Nikki Hayes, MPH

Branch Chief

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

nhayes2@cdc.gov

Janet Marchibroda

Executive Director, Programs

National Football League Alumni Association

janet.marchibroda@nflalumni.org