



PEACE IN Action

"Partnering for Equity: An Academic and Community Alliance to Eliminate Disparities throughout the Fibroid Experience" Study

Happy New Year!

As 2026 begins, we are taking a quiet moment to reflect on the wonderful progress we've made — together — in our goal to improve the fibroid journey for all women. To us, the work of PEACE is always about more than research; it's about hearing women's experiences, facilitating connection, and working together to advance care. Each conversation is an ingredient in our center's innovation, and we are sincerely grateful to you — our partners, participants, and supporters — for sharing your time with us this past year.

Many of you have helped us, in particular, make success of our inaugural events such as our Community Open House, 'Weathering' Book Club, and roving pop-ups. In the new year, we are excited to be repeating such gatherings and building on their strong base to reach new audiences through fresh offerings. To help jump-start these efforts, we are thrilled to announce the launch of our 'Dissemination Grant' program — an initiative that will provide grants of \$1,000 to \$2,500 to help

community-based organizations host their own Uterine Fibroid (UF) education forums (please see flyer for details).

In this newsletter, we will be taking stock of recent PEACE developments, looking back to year-end highlights and forward to our plans for 2026. Thank you for joining us, in partnership, as we strive to break barriers and soften the fibroid experience for everyone. Continuing our work together, we can be sure: the best is yet to come!

PEACE COMMUNITY DISSEMINATION GRANT

PEACE is pleased to announce the inaugural year of its Community Dissemination Grant program. Grants of \$1,000 to \$2,500 are available to support community organizations in hosting uterine fibroid (UF) education and outreach events.

APPLICATION AND ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES:

Applications are open to 501(c)(3) organizations in Georgia, Maryland, Michigan, Massachusetts, and New York.

Applications should include:

- **Key information on your Community Organization:** name, email address, location, and primary areas of focus
- **Describe your proposed event:** type of event, date of event, target population, promotion strategies, content overview, agenda/speakers, detailed budget, and evaluation measures

Award recipients will be recognized through the PEACE communications network and will be featured in the PEACE newsletter.

APPLY NOW!

Submit your application easily using our Qualtrics survey. Scan the QR code or visit: <https://tinyurl.com/y67hsm52>



Applications submitted via email will be returned to be resubmitted via Qualtrics.

**APPLICATION SUBMISSION DEADLINE:
FEBRUARY 11, 2026**



PARTNERING FOR EQUITY: AN ACADEMIC AND
COMMUNITY ALLIANCE TO ELIMINATE DISPARITIES
THROUGHOUT THE FIBROID EXPERIENCE



PLEASE SEND QUESTIONS TO PEACE-study@med.umich.edu

PEACE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY Share with Community Orgs

This is an opportunity to be innovative, and explore new opportunities for sharing vital information about uterine fibroids. We are grateful for the work you do, and we cannot wait to support your efforts in reaching your community.

Applications are due on February 11, 2026.

The recipient will be celebrated in our newsletter and across our networks.

SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE: Dissemination

Dissemination is the process of sharing information with a wider audience. For PEACE, this means communicating research insights and collaborator knowledge — from clinicians, community partners, and patients — locally, state-wide, nationally, and internationally. We use multiple forms of dissemination to reach people: newsletters, in-person events, conference presentations, academic and non-academic publications, and more. By working across these modes, we aim to raise awareness of fibroids and the challenges women face living with, and receiving care for, this condition.

The work of PEACE is always centered on breaking down barriers that prevent women from receiving the best (for them) fibroid care. Embracing a dissemination approach that speaks directly to people with different knowledge, experience, and perspectives, is essential for making meaningful impacts. If you have ideas for better reaching your community, contact our team!

WHAT'S NEW



STAFF HIGHLIGHT: Emily Wendel

We are thrilled to welcome Emily Wendel, MPH to the onWHARD team, as our new Community Engagement Manager.

Emily joins us following a long tenure with FHI 360, where she specialized in building authentic partnerships with local leaders and community members across the project's ten served countries. A former Peace Corps member, Emily is also experienced in women's health advocacy and brings a long-standing interest in health equity.

Emily will be working with our partners, and across projects like PEACE, to expand our engagement and enable more presence in our communities. Her passion for this work, she tells us, is matched only by her other loves: local produce, cheese, and endurance running.



NEW X 2! Please also join us in welcoming two new honorary team members: Addie and Izzy. In the fall, our long-time team-mate, Kirsten, welcomed this precious pair to her family. All are doing well, including new — previously reluctant, now enthusiastic — big sister, Emi.



One of onWHARD's collaborators has a new role: spouse of a Town Council Member! Whitney Robinson, PhD, is a Duke OBGYN faculty member and co-Investigator on PEACE Project 3. This fall, her husband, Louie Rivers, won a seat on their Town Council in Chapel Hill, NC. His 4-year term began this December. Dr. Robinson is very proud and has enjoyed

learning more about her town, its people, and ways to contribute to her local community.

RECENT EVENT: First Annual PEACE External Advisory Board Meeting

On September 15, 2025, the PEACE Center convened its first annual External and Internal Advisory Boards Meeting at The Graduate Hotel in Ann Arbor. The meeting brought together external leaders in medicine and research, including Dr. Amy Murtha, Al Richmond, Dr. Laura Riley, and Dr. Laura Smith, alongside internal leaders such as Dr. John Ayanian, Dr. Christine Cole Johnson, Dr. Jose Texiera, and our OBGYN Chair Dr. Dee Fenner. Virtual participation broadened engagement, including representatives from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Black Women's Health Imperative. All attendees brought tremendous energy, insight, and enthusiasm to the day's discussions.

PEACE PI's — Dr. Erica Marsh, Dr. Ganesa Wegienka, and Dr. David Williams — along with Co-I's, Community Advisory Board representative Tanika Gray Valbrun, and Year 1 Pilot Grantee representative Taneka Jones, shared encouraging early findings from the center's projects.

The Advisory Board praised PEACE's strong year of output and encouraged, in 2026, a focus on deepening integration across projects and innovating new supports for emerging investigators in this important field. Our team was grateful for the committee's enthusiasm for our efforts to date, and appreciative of their observations as we continue the work of advancing equitable and effective care in women's health.



Special NOTICE



Congratulations to **Arthi Ramakrishnan** (Director of Research Operations, onWHARD) who has been nominated to serve on the Clinical Research Coordinator (CRC) Governance Board at Michigan Medicine! This Board plays a vital role in shaping and advancing clinical research across the institution, by guiding CRC hiring practices and ensuring promotions are equitable. Arthi's appointment highlights her leadership and commitment to advancing excellence in clinical research, and we are proud of her initiative and expertise.

PARTNER HIGHLIGHT: The White Dress Project

The PEACE Center is made up of multiple Cores, reflecting the different skills and voices needed to deliver on our goals. Our Community Engagement Core (CEC) is essential, as it serves to center community across our initiatives, ensuring that our work always reflects the needs of, and is shared clearly and directly with, all women.

To lead this Core, our team needed someone passionate about women's health and experienced in engaging others to advance equity. **Tanika Gray Valbrun** is an ardent health advocate and journalist, who established and leads an active non-profit organization — The White Dress Project — dedicated to raising awareness about uterine fibroids and advocating for research, education, and legislation that supports women with this condition.

Under Tanika's leadership, The White Dress Project has become a leading voice in the fight for better fibroid care access and treatment. She brings a depth of lived experience and professional knowledge that ensures the work of PEACE always includes the voice of women impacted by fibroids, and is done in service to their journeys.

Why a "White Dress?"

Many people with fibroids experience heavy menstrual bleeding, making light-colored clothing feel impossible or anxiety-inducing. A white dress is an emblem, representing a hopeful future lived without fear, shame, or discomfort.



PEACE CALENDAR: WHAT'S COMING UP?

List of Selected Upcoming
Team Events + Offerings

JANUARY

CERVICAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Tuesdays: Tabling at CHASS for free community anemia screenings

1/14: Tabling at Michigan Medicine triangle for Obesity Awareness Week

1/18: Christmas in January for People Experiencing Homelessness

1/19: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

1/28: Tabling at Michigan Medicine triangle for Cervical Cancer Awareness Month

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FEBRUARY

BLACK HISTORY & AMERICAN HEART MONTH

Tuesdays: Tabling at CHASS for free community anemia screenings

2/7: National Black HIV/AIDS Awareness Day

2/11: Tabling at Michigan Medicine triangle for Black History Month

2/17: Lunar New Year

2/18: OB-GYN Department Luncheon for Lunar New Year

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MARCH

ENDOMETRIOSIS MONTH

Tuesdays: Tabling at CHASS for free community anemia screenings

3/11: Tabling at Michigan Medicine triangle for Endometriosis Awareness Month

3/14: Women's and Wellness Market at DHDC

3/28: Endometriosis Awareness Day

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