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## ***Frequently Asked Questions*** **Colorado Ovarian Cancer Alliance (COCA)**

### **What is the Colorado Ovarian Cancer Alliance?**

The Colorado Ovarian Cancer Alliance (COCA) was established in June of 2005 as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose mission is to promote awareness of ovarian cancer through advocacy and education, and to support survivors of ovarian cancer. COCA members are survivors, family and friends, medical professionals, and volunteers who want to make a difference in Colorado in the battle against ovarian cancer. COCA is a partner-member of the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance (OCNA).

### **For what does COCA advocate?**

The Colorado Ovarian Cancer Alliance advocates for excellence in health care for, and increased research on, ovarian cancer. Some of COCA's strategic partners in these efforts include the Ovarian Cancer National Alliance, the University of Colorado School of Medicine, the 9Health Fair, the Colorado Cancer Coalition, the Colorado Ovarian Cancer Advisory Panel, the Cheryl Shakleford Foundation, and the Colorado Department of Public Health and the Environment. COCA also is active in the Colorado Consumer Health Initiative, the Colorado Chronic Care Coalition and the American Cancer Society's Cancer Action Network.

### **How does COCA educate Coloradans?**

COCA members want to raise public awareness of ovarian cancer by educating doctors, health care providers and the public. Through its *Speakers Bureau*, COCA provides clubs, organizations and groups interested in learning more about ovarian cancer with knowledgeable speakers. At local *Health Fairs*, COCA supplies information about the signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer, risk factors, and other important facts about this disease for which early detection is the key to long-time survival. COCA also raises awareness about symptoms and risks via *Survivors Teaching Students*. Ovarian cancer survivors put a face on this illness by sharing their stories with medical and nursing students at the University of Colorado School of Medicine, Regis University and other health sciences educational institutions.

### **Why is the education COCA provides important?**

It is critical that women learn about the symptoms of ovarian cancer. Pap smears do not detect this disease and there are currently no reliable screening methods. Knowing the signs and symptoms is the best way for a woman to keep track of her health regarding ovarian cancer. It is also important to know the risk factors and what to do if you have symptoms. In addition, ovarian cancer is commonly misdiagnosed as an intestinal disorder; so it is crucial that physicians raise their awareness of the signs and symptoms of ovarian cancer.

**What types of support does COCA offer?**

COCA offers ovarian cancer support groups, called Nicki's Circle. Nicki's Circle is a safe place for women with ovarian cancer and their caretakers to meet other women and share their experiences, fears and hopes as well as information. These groups, which are offered monthly around the Denver metro area, are professionally led and are free of cost to participants. In addition, COCA has a Nicki's Circle Online as well as a Nicki's Circle Tele-Support Group. There is also a special Caregivers Circle for those who are caring for or are close to someone who is dealing with a diagnosis of ovarian cancer. For more information about COCA's support services, contact [support@colo-ovariancancer.org](mailto:support@colo-ovariancancer.org).

**How does the Colorado Ovarian Cancer Alliance fund its programs?**

COCA relies on contributions to fund the education, advocacy and support it offers to Colorado women. Tax-deductible donations can be made online at [www.colo-ovariancancer.org](http://www.colo-ovariancancer.org) or by sending a check to P.O. Box 9216, Denver, CO 80209.

**Where can I find information about COCA events and fundraisers?**

Visit [events@colo-ovariancancer.org](mailto:events@colo-ovariancancer.org).

**How can I contact the Colorado Ovarian Cancer Alliance?**

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 9216, Denver, CO 80209

Phone: 303.506.7014 or 1.800.428.0642

Email: [contactus@colo-ovariancancer.org](mailto:contactus@colo-ovariancancer.org)

Website: [www.colo-ovariancancer.org](http://www.colo-ovariancancer.org)