The Appalachia Community Cancer Network (ACCN) is a team of community and academic partners from Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia working together to reduce cancer health disparities in the Appalachian region.

ACCN is one of 23 Community Networks Program Centers across the country funded by the National Cancer Institute to conduct community-based participatory research (CBPR), outreach, and training activities to reduce the cancer burden in minority and underserved communities.

ACCN consists of an Administrative Core, Research Program, Training Program, Community Outreach Program, and numerous community partners throughout central and northern Appalachia.

The aims of the ACCN are to:

1) Maintain community partnerships to facilitate cancer health disparities research;
2) Conduct CBPR to address cancer health disparities in Appalachia;
3) Develop a training program in CBPR for junior investigators; and
4) Disseminate research findings to community and scientific partners.

ACCN is partnering with churches in the region to implement a Faith-based Initiative to Promote Health in Appalachia to promote health and raise awareness about cancer prevention and early detection. At least 20 churches from the Appalachian region of Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia will participate in this project.

Through participating in this project, church members will receive some basic health information and assessments, wellness information, and health education by local experts. 

Half of the churches will initially receive a program on healthy eating and exercise (Walk by Faith) for the first part of the study. These churches will "test" the program and tell the researchers what works and what does not. The other half of the churches will initially receive information on cancer screening tests (Ribbons of Faith) for the first part of the study. Once the Walk by Faith program has been finalized and the suggested changes completed, this program will be offered to the churches who participated in the Ribbons of Faith program, and vice versa. Churches will be randomly assigned to receive either the Walk by Faith or the Ribbons of Faith program first, but all participating churches will have the opportunity to participate in both programs. These programs will start by September 2011 and both will conclude by August 2015.

The results of this project will have immediate impact among members of participating churches and the successful strategies could be used to improve the health of residents of other Appalachian states in the future.