TuSalud

The Fibroids Movie “Red Alert” Nears Completion

Filmmaker Erica L. Taylor offered viewers a sneak peek at her upcoming documentary about uterine fibroids at the recent RePro Film Festival.

August 18, 2021 By Kate Ferguson

After a torturous experience with uterine fibroids, Erica L. Taylor vowed to bring visibility to this common health condition affecting so many women. Taylor used her know-how as a filmmaker to direct and produce the film Red Alert: The Fight Against Fibroids, which was previewed on August 16 during the second week of the 2021 RePro Film Festival. After the showing, Taylor joined the festival’s founders for a “Call-to-Action Conversation” featured on ReProFilmFest.com.

African-American women are three times more likely than white women to develop uterine fibroids. In fact, an estimated 80% of Black females will suffer from the usually noncancerous tumors by age 50. For white women, the estimate is 70%.

“My hope is that Red Alert becomes more than a documentary,” Taylor says. “I want it to become a medical, social and political movement that will improve the quality of life for women everywhere.”

Taylor’s experience with fibroids left her feeling disturbed and distrustful of the U.S. health care system. “There is a societal stigma around period discussion and a general lack of empathy for reproductive complications, especially for women in underserved communities,” she says. “We have yet to see the necessary resources allocated toward research of the fibroid epidemic, even though the mental, physical and emotional damage from the symptoms is often incomprehensible.”

The film employs a lyrical production and visual style and features work by contemporary artists, including muralists and other visual artists known for art that focuses on female strength, empowerment, endurance and compassion. The documentary also features an original soundtrack by independent musicians who were commissioned to create songs specifically for Red Alert.

Taylor teamed with Andy Baeza, a photographer, videographer and audio engineer, and Jasmine Leyva, an actress, to produce the film.

Festival founders Lela Meadow-Conner, Debby Samples and Mallory Martin asked Taylor to submit

Red Alert to this year's event. However, because the movie was in the middle of production and was not yet ready for submission, it screened only as a preview.

"The goal of Red Alert: The Fight Against Fibroids is to build awareness and compassion for the vast number of women who are suffering from fibroids and related reproductive illnesses," stresses Taylor. "Our goal is to present the faces of fibroids—through thoughtful, artistic production, along with cutting edge research that could spark progressive change for millions of lives everywhere—while expressing the hopes and fears of women whose lives have been interrupted."

The filmmakers recruited dozens of women to share their fibroid stories via Facebook and reached out as well to colleges, organizations and local and national groups that support the development of the African-American community and the elimination of health inequities.

"When I was diagnosed with fibroids, I had no idea I'd be fighting with one hand tied behind my back," Taylor says. "I reached out to my sisters for help, only to find that they were fighting too. That was one of many signs that I had to make this film. I'm no longer interested in suffering in silence."

To learn more about uterine fibroids, read "Understanding Uterine Fibroids," and check out "ER Visits, Heavy Bleeding, Painful Surgeries and Fertility Issues" for Erica L. Taylor's experiences with fibroids.

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