TuSalud

Katie Couric Shines a Light on Cancer in the Time of COVID-19 [VIDEO]

Couric has partnered with Merck to produce a web series about being treated for cancer during the pandemic.

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News anchor Katie Couric has teamed up with the pharmaceutical company Merck to create a web series dedicated to shining a light on the experiences of people with cancer during the COVID-19 pandemic, the newsletter Fierce Pharma reports.

Titled Katie Couric Explores: Cancer During COVID-19, the series features testimonials from people being treated for cancer about the surreal nature of falling ill with a potentially deadly disease at a time when an entirely different one has captured the world's attention. The series was developed by Merck and Katie Couric Media.

Sarah Sanders, who has metastatic triple-negative breast cancer, spoke to Couric about her treatment in the premiere, which can be viewed on Couric's YouTube channel.

Diagnosed with the particularly aggressive form of breast cancer in February, about a month before her hometown of New York City began shutting down, the 35-year-old Sanders has had to take extreme precautions when traveling to and from the hospital where she receives chemotherapy—wearing "everything but a hazmat suit," for example, and using a "special car service"—because she is immunocompromised and, as a result, particularly susceptible to infection by viruses like COVID-19.

But, Sanders said, the experience has opened her eyes to the "gratitude you need to have for life." Though she is set to undergo a double mastectomy later this summer, she is trying to stay positive.

"Even just looking out the window and having a great little cup of coffee, I find gratitude in that, because I can do it today," she said. "And I'll focus on tomorrow later."

Couric, whose first husband died of colorectal cancer in 1998 and whose sister died of pancreatic cancer in 2001, made a point of raising awareness of cancer prevention tactics on NBC's Today show, which she cohosted from 1991 to 2006. In March 2000, she elected to undergo a

colonoscopy on-air, a decision that University of Michigan researchers, writing in the journal Archives of Internal Medicine, credited with a spike in the number of colonoscopies performed in subsequent months; in October 2005, she observed National Breast Cancer Awareness Month by getting a mammogram as cameras rolled. Couric has also founded or cofounded a number of charitable organizations that work to educate the public about screening procedures and technologies, including Stand Up To Cancer and the National Colorectal Cancer Research Alliance.

To read more about Couric's crusade against cancer, click here.

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