



spotlight on health

Breakthroughs In Colorectal Screening And Treatments

(NAPSA)—Researchers are making progress against colorectal cancer, the country's second leading cancer killer. Yet until recently many Americans knew little about this disease that kills more than 55,000 annually. To increase awareness, the Cancer Research Foundation of America (CRFA) is educating the public about the importance of screening and new treatment options.

"We are heartened by significant advances against America's second leading cancer killer on both the prevention and treatment fronts," said Carolyn Aldigé, President and Founder of the CRFA. "Our challenge is to spread the word to Americans about the importance of regular screenings, and if they are diagnosed with colorectal cancer they need to know that there are new, effective treatments available."

The first step in prevention is screening. Regular screening can help prevent colorectal cancer by catching pre-cancerous polyps, and can help discover the disease in its earliest, most curable stages. According to guidelines adopted by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the American Cancer Society, men and women aged 50 or above should have a fecal occult blood test yearly, a sigmoidoscopy every five years, or a colonoscopy or double contrast barium every 5 to 10 years.

For the last 40 years, there have been few advances in the treatment of colorectal cancer. Until recently, standard treatment has been intravenous chemotherapy. Now, a chemotherapy pill called Xeloda has become available. Xeloda is for the first-line treatment of patients with metastatic colorectal cancer when treatment with fluoropyridimine therapy alone is preferred.



Carolyn Aldigé, President and Founder of the Cancer Research Foundation of America says new tests and treatments may help many Americans combat cancer.

"Although some chemotherapies are not available as oral preparations, new oral chemotherapy promises significant lifestyle benefits for some patients," said Dr. Alan Venook, professor of clinical medicine at the University of California San Francisco. "Oral dosing makes it possible for selected patients to spend less time in the hospital and more time with family and friends. Many patients living in remote areas will be spared long-distance travel previously required for infusion treatments."

"An oral form of chemotherapy marks a significant advance in colorectal cancer treatment," said Dr. Barry Kaplan, head of oncology at the New York Hospital Medical Center in Queens. "Oral chemotherapy provides the patient receiving treatment with flexibility, so they can take their medicine on-the-go without disrupting work or other activities."

For more information about colorectal cancer and new treatment options please call 1-800-227-CRFA or visit www.crfa.org.