



HEALTH AWARENESS

Eliminating Barriers To Colon Cancer Screening

(NAPSA)—There is good news for those concerned about colon cancer. Physicians know that colon cancer screening saves lives. Yet an estimated 148,000 Americans, both women and men, are diagnosed with colorectal cancer each year, and every year approximately 55,000 will die—the nation's second deadliest cancer. Yet, it's believed most of these deaths could be prevented through proper screening.

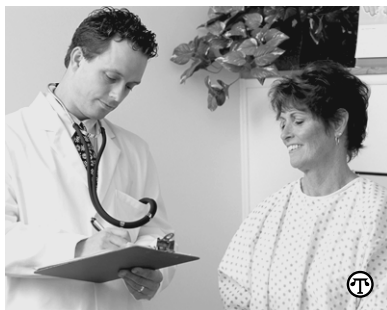
However, experts from the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) warn that too few Americans are getting screened. Colorectal screening rates remain very low, even though Medicare and many private plans pay for screening tests.

Despite increasing public awareness of colon cancer screening tests through the efforts of Katie Couric and others, many people continue to face obstacles to screening. Even Medicare beneficiaries, for whom incidence and death from the disease are highest, encounter problems with access to screening colonoscopy.

Congress Can Help

"Pending legislation in the U.S. Congress, such as the Colon Cancer Screen for Life Act (S.1010/H.R. 1632), promises to remove Medicare's barriers to screening," says ACG President Dr. Jack A. DiPalma of Mobile, Alabama. "But only one small improvement, the waiver of the Medicare deductible, was approved for 2006, so much remains to be done."

Research indicates that colon cancer arises from precancerous growths or polyps that grow in the colon. When detected early, these



Talk to your doctor about getting tested for colorectal cancer. Regular screening for and removal of polyps can reduce your risk of developing colorectal cancer by up to 90 percent.

growths or polyps can be removed, actually preventing the development of colon cancer.

"With improved use of colon cancer screening, we can save lives," adds Dr. DiPalma.

The College currently recommends colonoscopy every 10 years beginning at age 50 for average-risk individuals as the preferred screening strategy to prevent colon cancer.

For patients with higher risk factors such as a family history of colon cancer or a previous personal history of polyps, and for African Americans, ACG recommends earlier and/or more frequent screening with colonoscopy.

To learn more about the benefits of colorectal cancer screening, speak with your doctor or visit www.acg.gi.org. To request free information, write to the American College of Gastroenterology at: 6400 Goldsboro Rd., #450, Bethesda, MD 20817.