



January 9, 2018

Dear Colleagues,

As we enter 2018, the leadership of local chapters of American College of Physicians and American College of Gastroenterology would like to remind you of the lifesaving importance of colorectal cancer screening.

ACG and ACP Chapters in Oklahoma are collaborating to bring attention to the public health challenges of colorectal cancer at a time when we all struggle to understand the details of our evolving health care system and its impact on our daily practices.

The situation in Oklahoma is serious. Our state has one of the lowest rates of colorectal cancer screening in the United States – ranking among the bottom 13 states. According to the CDC, approximately 58 percent of Oklahomans received colorectal cancer screening in 2013, and the number increased to barely 59 percent¹ by 2016. During this same time, the national average increased from 64 percent to almost 68 percent.

We recognize that discussions with our patients regarding preventive health measures – especially invasive screening tests for colorectal cancer – can sometimes be difficult. To help you engage more effectively with patients, we have drafted some messages about the importance of colorectal cancer screening and options.

The Oklahoma ACP chapter and the ACG endorse the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable's (NCCRT) public health initiative "80% by 2018²." We join the more than 1,000 organizations working toward the shared goal of screening 80% of eligible U.S. adults for colorectal cancer by 2018.

As primary care physicians and gastroenterologists, we are on the front line in making colorectal cancer prevention a reality. We hope the attached messages will inspire your commitment to engage with patients and advance colorectal cancer screening and prevention.

For additional colorectal cancer awareness patient education tools, fact sheets and social media graphics, visit gi.org/acg-institute/colorectal-cancer-awareness.

Sincerely,



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¹ https://www.americashealthrankings.org/explore/2016-annual-report/measure/colorectal_cancer_screening/state/OK

² www.nccrt.org/80by2018

American College of Physicians & American College of Gastroenterology

Oklahoma Colorectal Cancer Initiative

National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, March 2018

KEY MESSAGES

- Colorectal cancer, second only to lung cancer as the leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, affects men and women equally. **Yet few Americans know that colorectal cancer can be prevented -- not just detected -- through colonoscopy.**
- Colorectal cancer arises from pre-cancerous growths or polyps that grow in the colon. When detected early, polyps can be removed, halting their progression to colorectal cancer. While early detection of any cancer is important, prevention is powerful.
- About 1 in 3 adults between 50 and 75 years old – about 23 million people – are not getting tested as recommended.
- The people less likely to get tested are Hispanics, American Indians or Alaska Natives, rural populations, men, those 50 to 64, and those with lower education and income.
- According to the American Cancer Society, **the colon cancer death rate in this country could be cut in half if Americans simply followed recommended screening guidelines.** Last year alone, more than 50,000 people died of colorectal cancer in the United States.
- Talk to your doctor about the screening test that is right for you. There are several recommended screening test options, including: colonoscopy, stool tests (guaiac fecal occult blood test [FOBT], fecal immunochemical test [FIT] or stool DNA test), and X-ray exams in some cases. **The best test is the one that gets done.**
- Learn more about colorectal cancer screening at gi.org/coloncancer