

The Colorectal Cancer Prevention, Early Detection, and Treatment Act, updated 12/4/2009

C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition strongly supports *The Colorectal Cancer Prevention, Early Detection, and Treatment Act*. Passage of the legislation will ensure that all Americans have access to appropriate screening, regardless of their financial situation. The Act will establish a life-saving program to fight colorectal cancer, one of the most easily preventable cancers.

Colorectal cancer is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second leading cause of cancer death in both men and women in the United States. Every three and a half minutes, someone is diagnosed with colorectal cancer. Every nine minutes, someone dies from colorectal cancer.

In 2009, an estimated 106,100 new cases of colon cancer and 40,870 new cases of rectal cancer will be diagnosed and nearly 50,000 deaths will be caused by colorectal cancer.¹ The real tragedy is that many of these cancer cases and cancer deaths occur needlessly, and could be prevented if more people were screened. Screening and early detection saves lives. Unfortunately, many Americans do not have access to this lifesaving screening due to poverty, inadequate insurance coverage, or no insurance whatsoever.

When colorectal cancer is diagnosed at an early stage, the five year survival rate is nearly 90 percent. However, when cancer is not diagnosed until it has spread to distant organs, the five year survival rate is less than five percent. Furthermore, the disease can be prevented through the early identification and removal of pre-cancerous polyps, detectable only through colorectal cancer screenings.

Economic disparities play a significant role in the high number of late diagnoses. Being uninsured often hinders access to colorectal cancer screening tests and their potentially lifesaving benefits. A national colorectal cancer screening and treatment program has the potential to help save 30,000 – 44,000 lives every year.²

The Colorectal Cancer Prevention, Early Detection, and Treatment Act amends the Public Health Service Act to allow the Secretary of Health and Human Services, acting through the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), to make grants to states and Indian tribes for colorectal cancer programs that:

- Target screening services toward individuals between 50 – 64 years of age (the pre-Medicare population), or those under 50 but with high risk of such cancer.
- Give priority to low-income, uninsured and underinsured individuals who would not otherwise have coverage for colorectal cancer screening, diagnostic follow up, and/or treatment.
- Provide case management and referrals for medical treatment of screened individuals.

¹ 2009 American Cancer Society's Cancer Facts and Figures

² American Cancer Society

- Provide education and training for health professionals in the detection of colorectal cancer.
- Develop and disseminate findings and outcomes data in order to evaluate the program for cost, effectiveness and reach, which will inform ongoing community screening and treatment efforts.

The bill also amends title XIX (Medicaid) of the Social Security Act to allow states to provide medical assistance to individuals who have been screened for colorectal cancer under this Act and who need treatment for complications due to screening or colorectal cancer.

- This will ensure the full range of cancer care for individuals screened, including the appropriate follow-up for abnormal tests, diagnostic and therapeutic services, and treatment for detected cancers.

The legislation authorizes \$50 million in funding for the first year of the program, \$75 million for the second year, \$150 million for the third year, \$200 million for the fourth year, and \$250 million for the fifth year of the program.

Increased colorectal cancer screening among pre-Medicare eligible individuals (aged 50-64 years) has the potential to translate into BILLIONS OF DOLLARS IN SAVINGS FOR THE MEDICARE PROGRAM. A study conducted by the National Colorectal Cancer Round Table (NCCRT) and the independent Lewin Group, found a potential of \$15 billion in savings to Medicare are possible simply through screening those individuals between the ages of 50 – 64.

Conclusion: The Colorectal Cancer Prevention, Early Detection, and Treatment Act will save thousands of lives and save Medicare billions of dollars.

C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition strongly supports The Colorectal Cancer Prevention, Early Detection, and Treatment Act. Passage of this legislation will increase screenings and decrease deaths from colorectal cancer.

Colorectal cancer treatment costs continue to rise. By increasing screening rates for those individuals 50 – 64 years of age, we will see a reduction in costs to Medicare. The potential for savings in comparison to the cost of the screening program is fiscally responsible.

C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition is a national, nonpartisan advocacy organization whose mission is to win the fight against colorectal cancer through research, empowerment and access.