

## **New Toolkit Can Help Increase Colorectal Cancer Screening Rates**

**Portland, Ore. — October 5, 2009** — Colorectal cancer (CRC) is the #2 cancer killer in Oregon, claiming more than 600 lives each year. Most CRC deaths and many colorectal cancers are preventable through early screening—yet only about half of Oregonians over age 50 receive recommended screening.

A new Colorectal Cancer Screening Toolkit has been released by the Oregon Partnership for Cancer Control (OPCC) in support of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) goal of an 80% national screening rate by 2014. The toolkit helps clinic teams communicate with patients and community groups about CRC risks and motivate patients to complete the potentially life-saving screening.

Developed by Acumentra Health for the Oregon Department of Human Services (DHS), under a grant from the CDC, the Colorectal Cancer Screening Toolkit includes modules for three distinct audiences:

- Primary care clinic staff, including medical assistants and nurses
- Physicians and other primary care providers
- Community groups (for presentations at health fairs, senior centers, etc.)

“The toolkit fills a need, not just for educating providers and clinic staff, but for helping them teach their patients that colorectal cancer is often preventable,” says Sabrina Freewynn, Comprehensive Cancer Program Coordinator for DHS, which leads OPCC efforts. “These materials will help clinics and outreach workers persuade patients to follow through with screening, which could save their lives.”

The clinic staff materials, called the Colorectal Cancer Screening Promotion Program, prepare staff to play a larger role in promoting CRC screening and encouraging patient follow-through. The program trains staff to discuss the value of CRC screening to patients; explain screening options (colonoscopy, sigmoidoscopy, and fecal occult blood testing); and increase the number of patients in their practice who complete screening.

The program incorporates several best practices identified by the National Colorectal Cancer Round Table (NCCRT) for increasing screening rates:

- a recommendation from a physician or nurse practitioner to complete a CRC screening
- patient education based on readiness for CRC screening (decision stage model)
- modification of staff roles related to assessing and reminding patients

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“The Screening Promotion Program helps clinic staff talk more easily and personally about CRC screening,” says Ruth Medak, MD, associate medical director for Aumentra Health and lead developer on the project. “Hearing the medical assistant say, ‘My mother got screened, and it gave us all peace of mind,’ boosts the patient’s determination to get it done.”

The teaching tools and techniques for influencing patients draw on approaches developed by the NCCRT. Materials for the two learning sessions in the Colorectal Cancer Screening Promotion Program also incorporate recommendations of the United States Preventive Services Task Force. The presentations and materials were field tested with practice teams at a Portland-area medical group. The OPCC welcomes additional feedback on the toolkit materials via the toolkit web page.

For more information and to download the toolkit, visit [www.acumentra.org/CRC](http://www.acumentra.org/CRC).

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Acumentra Health is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the quality and effectiveness of health care. Established in 1984, Acumentra Health contracts with Medicare to support effective, evidence-based health care for Medicare beneficiaries in Oregon, and oversees the state’s Medicare Beneficiary Protection Program. Acumentra Health also provides External Quality Review of managed healthcare services provided to Medicaid enrollees in Oregon and Washington, and collaborates with other stakeholder organizations in healthcare quality assurance and quality improvement projects. For more information, visit [www.acumentra.org](http://www.acumentra.org).