



INSTITUTE FOR CLINICAL SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT

NEWS RELEASE

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Minnesota Organizations Join Together to Save 500 Lives

Goal Is to Increase Colon Screenings That Could Prevent Cancer

BLOOMINGTON, Minn., March 18, 2010 – As part of National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, four health organizations have kicked off an initiative to increase screenings for Minnesotans at risk from this disease. Involved in the effort are the American Cancer Society, Minnesota Cancer Alliance, Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement (ICSI), and MN Community Measurement (MNCM).

“With appropriate screening and surveillance, most colon cancers are preventable,” says Brian Rank, MD, Medical Director of HealthPartners Medical Group and Board Chair, ICSI. “Yet one in three Minnesotans are not getting screened as recommended. Increasing screenings to 80% of eligible patients has the potential to save hundreds of lives annually in Minnesota by preventing the development of late stage colon cancers.”

The initiative has four objectives: 1) raise awareness of the importance of screening for colorectal cancer among those at risk, 2) help providers recommend the right screening option based on the patient’s need, ability to pay, and preferences, 3) develop best clinical practices that facilitate identifying and screening appropriate patients moving forward, and 4) provide better measurements of the number of screens performed and the resultant patient outcomes.

According to Matt Flory at the American Cancer Society, "ACS and the Minnesota Cancer Alliance have been engaging consumers 50 and older, but with the support of ICSI's evidence-based guideline we can help health care providers address the specific needs of individuals with higher cancer risks, and the new provider metrics being developed by Minnesota Community Measurement will tell us how many more people have been screened as a result."

ICSI is a non-profit, quality improvement organization with 55 medical group and hospital members representing about 9,000 physicians in Minnesota. As part of the initiative, ICSI will provide materials on appropriate screenings for colorectal cancer to

its member and other provider groups, as well as consumers, through its Website (<http://www.icsi.org>).

A key focus will be on identifying the best practices for getting appropriate patients screened, and explaining the differences between five current screening options: colonoscopy, flexible sigmoidoscopy, CT colonography (virtual colonoscopy), fecal immunochemical test, and fecal occult blood test. ICSI's evidence-based guideline on colorectal cancer screenings will serve as the basis for the educational materials used in the initiative. That guideline recommends colorectal cancer screening for all patients 50 years of age and older, and age 45 and older for African Americans.

ICSI is also working with a committee comprised of Minnesota provider groups, health plans, American Cancer Society, Minnesota Cancer Alliance, and the Minnesota Department of Health to explore how prompts through electronic health records and/or other methods can routinely alert both providers and patients about the appropriate time to screen.

"We're excited to be part of this effort to improve health care in Minnesota," said Kent Bottles, MD, President of ICSI. "As a broad collaborative of provider groups, we believe ICSI members can play an important role in getting people screened for colorectal cancer and reducing mortality in the state."

Measurement

How effective such efforts are in increasing screenings for colorectal cancer will be measured longer term through MNCM (<http://www.mncm.org>). As the independent, non-profit organization that publicly reports on how Minnesota clinics and hospitals perform in treating and managing numerous health conditions, MNCM currently collects health plan claims data to determine the percentage of eligible patients screened in the state for colorectal cancer.

Starting July 1, 2010, MNCM will launch a yearlong measurement period during which provider groups will learn how to submit their own data on screenings directly to MNCM. In the same time span, providers performing colonoscopies will learn how to provide data on the outcomes of those tests. Provider groups will begin public reporting through MNCM on both these data points starting July 1, 2011.

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The Institute for Clinical Systems Improvement (www.icsi.org) is an independent, non-profit organization that brings diverse stakeholders together to find solutions to health care problems that no single group could solve alone. Sponsored by six health plans in Minnesota and Wisconsin, ICSI helps its 55 medical group and hospital members deliver patient-centered and value-driven care.