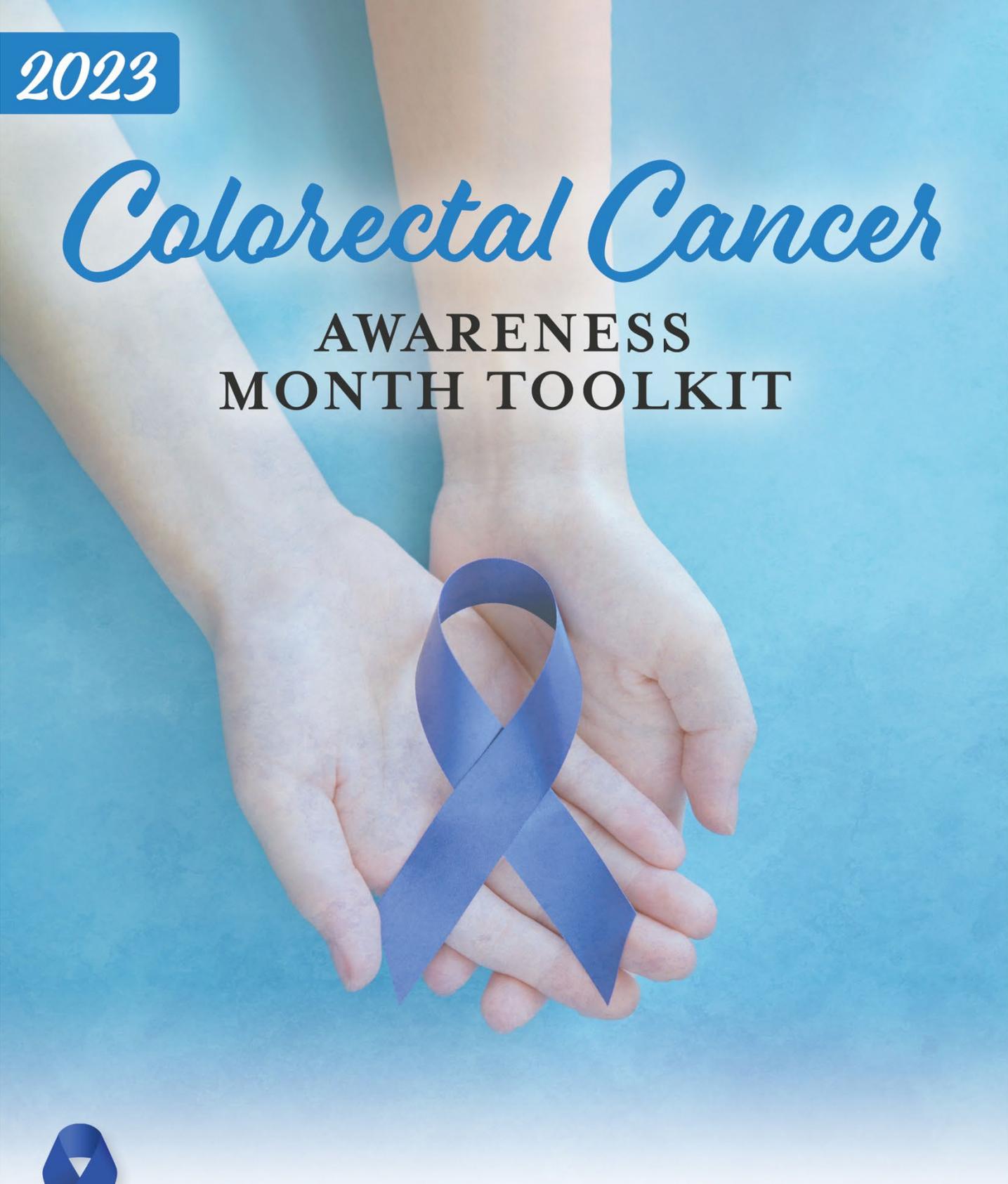


2023

# Colorectal Cancer

## AWARENESS MONTH TOOLKIT



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Public Health

**SCREENOUTCANCER**  
Colorectal Cancer

North Carolina Partnership to Increase  
Colorectal Cancer Screenings (NC PICCS)

## Introduction

The 2023 Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month toolkit is a set of resources to support public health/healthcare providers and professions across the state of North Carolina. The resources in this toolkit are designed for agencies to promote awareness of colorectal cancer, increase access to colorectal cancer screenings, and advocate for colorectal cancer survivors and their caregivers. Your agency can use the information and resources in this toolkit in the following ways:

- Start a new colorectal cancer screening program or enhance your current colorectal cancer screening program.
- Create a colorectal cancer messaging campaign to educate residents about the importance of being screened for colorectal cancer.
- Expand your agency's partner networks.
- Establish a policy, systems, and environmental change within your agency on colorectal cancer screening.

The NC Cancer Prevention and Control Branch serves to be a resource and guide for your efforts to help reduce the colorectal cancer burden and colorectal cancer health disparities in North Carolina.

For more information or additional resources, contact Jennifer Park, NC Partnership to Increase Colorectal Cancer Screenings Program Manager at [Jennifer.Park@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Park@dhhs.nc.gov) or Sarah Arthur, NC Comprehensive Cancer Control Program Manager at [Sarah.Arthur@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Sarah.Arthur@dhhs.nc.gov).

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## Sample Article

*(Your organization)* recognizes March as Colorectal Cancer Awareness month. Colorectal cancer is preventable when screenings are done. Colorectal cancer was the second leading cause of cancer death in North Carolina in 2019 (1,622). An estimated 4,740 people will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer and 1,640 people will die from colorectal cancer in 2023.<sup>1</sup> *(You may wish to include county projections instead: <https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/cancer/projections.htm> )*

The goal of screening is to detect colorectal cancer early before you have any symptoms. Colorectal cancer screening can find polyps before they become cancer. There are two types of screening tools: stool-based tests and colonoscopy. Colorectal cancer screening should start at age 45. People at higher risk due to family or personal medical history should consider periodic screening beginning at an earlier age and/or more frequent screening. If you have a family or personal medical history of colorectal cancer or polyps, talk with your healthcare provider.<sup>2</sup>

Even with regular colorectal cancer screening, it is important to talk to your doctor about your risk factors for developing colorectal cancer. The main risk factors for developing colorectal cancer include age, family history of colorectal cancer and polyps, inflammatory bowel disease, lack of regular physical activity, a diet high in processed meats, low in fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, being overweight or obese, and tobacco use. To help lower your risk of developing colorectal cancer, you can:

- Get a colorectal cancer screening
- Know your family health history including cancer illnesses and deaths
- Eat Healthy
- Be physically active
- Quit tobacco and vaping use
- Limit your alcohol consumption

Talk with your doctor about your risk factors and they can help you decide what colorectal cancer screening test is right for you. For more information about colorectal cancer, *(insert your contact information)*.

#### References:

1. Cancer Facts & Figures 2023 | American Cancer Society
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, What Are the Risk Factors for Colorectal Cancer? | CDC

## Sample Proclamation

If you want to reach out to your local elected leaders to help elevate awareness, here's a proclamation template you can customize for local audiences. Please fill in local data and name/title as appropriate. Colorectal cancer data specific to your county can be found in the [Projected New Cancer Cases and Deaths for Selected Sites by County, 2021](#) table located on the NC State Center for Health Statistics website under Cancer Projections (<https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/cancer/projections.htm>).

### COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH A SAMPLE PROCLAMATION

**(For local governments) WHEREAS**, in 2022, more than xx men and women in xxxxxxx County were diagnosed with colorectal cancer and xx died from this disease; and

**WHEREAS**, colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in North Carolina and the United States; and it is estimated that XX people in XXXX County/City were diagnosed and XX died from colorectal cancer in 2022; and

**WHEREAS**, Colorectal cancer affects men and women of all racial and ethnic groups, and the risk for developing colorectal cancer increases as one ages, especially individuals aged 45 years or older; and

**WHEREAS**, colorectal cancer particularly impacts historically marginalized populations, including racial and ethnic minorities, with African Americans having the highest incidence and mortality rates; and

**WHEREAS**, in North Carolina, 51.6 percent of people diagnosed with colorectal cancer from 2015-2019 were surviving by the end of 2020; and

**WHEREAS**, colorectal cancer is often preventable, treatable and beatable and greater screening awareness could save lives; and

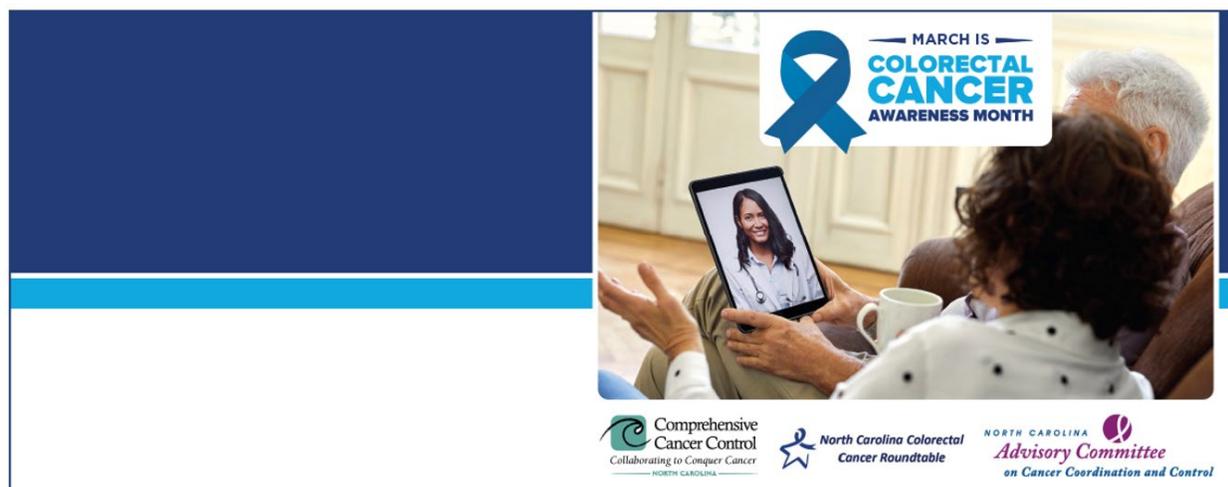
**WHEREAS**, Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month is an opportunity for organizations and health practitioners in North Carolina to promote awareness of screening, increase access to screenings, and advocate for those who are affected by and survivors of colorectal cancer; and

**WHEREAS**, the state of North Carolina encourages individuals to discuss family medical history with their health care provider, live a healthy lifestyle, and get screened when recommended by your doctor to decrease risk of colorectal cancer and to increase survivorship rates; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of North Carolina encourages people to support individuals affected by colorectal cancer during treatment, care and survivorship and remember the loved ones we have lost to this disease;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, (Representative name), (Representative Title) do hereby proclaim March 202X, as “**COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH**” in (location) and commend its observance to all residents.

## Sample Wear Blue Day Invitation



**Join us in wearing blue on Friday, March 3, 2023!**

**Dress in Blue Day** is a National Day to bring awareness to colorectal cancer and honor those who have been impacted. Join us in wearing blue and show your support for organizations, coalitions, and partnerships whose goals are to end colorectal cancer. In North Carolina there are 4,740 predicted new cases of colorectal cancer in 2023. If you wear blue, please send us pictures to (Insert Email). The following is information about Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month:

- [CDC Colorectal Cancer Awareness](#)- statistics, screening test options and personal stories.
- The [National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable's Resource Center](#) contains hundreds of resources for you to use during awareness month. Whether you are focusing on an educating a specific audience such as health centers or hospitals, or wanting to promote a public awareness campaign, or looking for an evidenced based intervention for your community, you will find it here.
- [Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Campaign](#) – This toolkit is designed to help stakeholders implement evidence-based practices when communicating about colorectal cancer. It can also help you plan, implement, and evaluate your communication strategy and make the case for why screening is important.
- Participate in a local event that is hosted by partners at the Colon Cancer Coalition. English and Spanish educational materials located [here](#).

Links:

1. CDC Colorectal Cancer Awareness link: <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/dcpc/resources/features/colorectalawareness/index.htm>
2. National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable's Resource Center link: <https://nccrt.org/resource-center/>
3. Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Campaign link: <https://cancercontroltap.smhs.gwu.edu/news/colorectal-cancer-awareness-month-campaign>
4. Colon Cancer Coalition Materials link: <https://coloncancercoalition.org/get-educated/info-materials/>

## Sample Social Media

If your organization uses social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month is a great time to engage your audience and educate about colorectal cancer screening services. Communication surrounding colorectal cancer should consider health literacy, promote patient-provider discussions of family history, risk and encourage early detection.

### Sample Social Media Posts

1. People may reduce their risk of developing colorectal cancer by increasing physical activity, limiting alcohol consumption, and avoiding tobacco.
2. If you or someone you know is 45 or older, see a doctor and get screened for colorectal cancer.
3. You need to get screened even if you have no family history. Most colorectal cancers occur in people with no family history of the disease.
4. There are several colon cancer screening test options. Talk to a doctor about which is right for you <http://bit.ly/2H1dla2>
5. #CancerCare Physicians: Your recommendation matters when it comes to getting patients screened for #ColorectalCancer. Here's how to optimize screening at your practice: <https://bit.ly/3Fb12D6>
6. Providers, implicit bias can affect how you practice and recommend colorectal cancer screening. Check out GW Cancer Center's Together, Equitable, Accessible, Meaningful (TEAM) training to learn more about recognizing implicit bias, and earn CME/CNE credits: <https://bit.ly/30liDSm>

#### Links:

1. Colorectal Cancer Screening Tests link: [https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/basic\\_info/screening/tests.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/basic_info/screening/tests.htm)
2. Colorectal Cancer Screening Continuing Education link: <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/continuing-education/index.htm>
3. TEAM training link: <https://cme.smhs.gwu.edu/gw-cancer-center-content/together-equitable-accessible-meaningful-team-training>

## Sample Light Up Blue Email Invitation

Good morning,

My name is *(insert name)*, and I am with *(insert organization's name)*. In North Carolina, it is predicted there will be 4,740 new cases and 1,640 deaths from colorectal cancer in 2023

<https://acsjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.3322/caac.21763>). **March is colorectal cancer awareness month.** Please join us in turning North Carolina blue on Friday, March 3, 2023, to promote Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. By lighting *(Insert landmark or building)* blue, we can bring awareness to colorectal cancer and honor those who have been impacted. Submit your landmark [here](#) and email pictures to *(insert your email address)* promoting your landmark location.

Click [here](#) to learn about colorectal cancer, symptoms, risk factors and screening tests available. If you have any questions, you can reach me at *(insert email)*. Together, we can partner with organizations, coalitions, and local agencies to end colorectal cancer. **Please join us in lighting North Carolina and *(insert location)* blue on Friday, March 3, 2023.**

Links:

1. Submit a Landmark link: <https://coloncancercoalition.org/events/blueforcrc/>
2. Colorectal Cancer Information link: <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/index.htm>

## Success Stories

### American Cancer Society “Get Screened” Campaign

The NC Advisory Committee on Cancer Coordination and Control Early Detection Subcommittee and NC Comprehensive Cancer Control Program staff have been partnering with the American Cancer Society on its “Get Screened” Campaign to encourage individuals to get their regular cancer screenings. American Cancer Society received funding to assist coalitions in screening efforts in their coverage area. The project team reviewed cancer data to determine the cancer “hotspots” across the state.

The “Get Screened” Campaign launched from September 16, 2022, through November 30, 2022, in the north central/eastern region of the state (Granville, Vance, Warren, Halifax, and Northampton counties). The “Get Screened Colorectal Cancer Activation” webinar occurred on August 16, 2022. There were 19 people (9 partners) in attendance. The colorectal cancer awareness campaign reached 79,157 people and 5,448 people clicked on the “learn more” feature of the social media assets. For more information, contact Larissa Williams at [Larissa.Williams@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Larissa.Williams@dhhs.nc.gov).

### NC Partners to Increase Colorectal Cancer Screenings Program

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, colorectal cancer (CRC) screening rates declined significantly. In 2020, there was a 4.66% decrease for national federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and an astounding 11.10% decrease for North Carolina’s FQHCs. In response to this decline, NC Partnership to Increase Colorectal Cancer Screenings (NC PICCS) program partnered with Kintegra Health’s Lincolnton, Hickory, Hudson and Highland clinics to increase colorectal cancer screening rates. Through participating in NC PICCS there has been a 14.83% increase in the Lincolnton clinic’s CRC screening rate, Hickory saw a 25.72% increase, Hudson clinic reported a 20.7% increase, and the Highland clinic saw a 33.7% increase.

These four NC PICCS selected clinics took action to increase their CRC screening rates. The clinics participated in the American Cancer Society’s 2021 and 2022 Quality Improvement (QI) Learning Collaborative. They attended the QI Boot Camp and monthly calls; developed Aim statements; performed process mapping, gap analyses, PDSA (Plan, Do, Study, Act) cycles; and, implemented evidence-based interventions. The clinics implemented several evidence-based interventions such as patient reminders, provider and staff feedback and assessment, and reduced structural barriers. Supporting activities included implementation of a fecal immunochemical test (FIT) kit tracking log, providing urine hats, small media, and education. In addition, NC PICCS provided monthly technical assistance calls as well as staff and provider training to understand CRC screening guidelines and recommendations. Kintegra Health successfully negotiated a follow-up colonoscopy cost rate as low as \$950, which is well below the Medicare rate, and developed a medical neighborhood for sustainability.

These four participating clinics had 36 positive fecal tests in one year. NC PICCS funds were used for 15 of the follow-up colonoscopies and Kintegra Health was able to remove polyps from 8 patients, therefore preventing 8 colorectal cancers in the fecal test to colonoscopy program. There were two cases of CRC diagnosed where the cancer was removed in the program. Kintegra Health has saved patients’ lives, increased quality of life, and reduced the economic impact of a colorectal cancer diagnosis in the community. The health system established relationships with local gastrointestinal (GI) practices enabling their patients to have a stronger continuum of care.

## How to Get Involved

### North Carolina Advisory for Cancer Coordination and Control

The North Carolina Advisory Committee on Cancer Coordination and Control (NC ACCCC) is a legislatively mandated committee comprised of members appointed by the governor, partners, and cancer survivors. The mission of NC ACCCC is to facilitate the reduction of cancer incidence and mortality for all North Carolinians, enhance statewide access to quality treatment and support services, and maximize quality of life for all North Carolina cancer survivors, patients, and their loved ones through educating and advising government officials, policy makers, public and private organizations, and the public. The NC ACCCC meets four times a year. The NC ACCCC focuses on six priority cancers, one of them being colorectal cancer. The NC ACCCC has four working subcommittees: Prevention, Early Detection, Care and Treatment, and Legislation and Education. For more information and get connected, contact Sarah Arthur at [Sarah.Arthur@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Sarah.Arthur@dhhs.nc.gov).

### North Carolina Colorectal Cancer Roundtable

The North Carolina Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (NC CRCRT) is a statewide coalition of public, private, voluntary organizations, and invited individuals dedicated to reducing the morbidity and mortality from colorectal cancer (CRC) in North Carolina, through coordinated leadership, strategic planning, and advocacy. The NC CRCRT and its task groups are actively working on policy, education and outreach, structured barriers to access to care and working with insurance companies and providers to increase screenings. There has been success in convening leaders from medical, community, academic, and public health agencies representing geographic locations across the state to serve as NC CRCRT Steering Committee members and partners. For more information, contact Jennifer Park at [Jennifer.Park@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:Jennifer.Park@dhhs.nc.gov).

### National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable

The National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable, established by the American Cancer Society (ACS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in 1997, is a national coalition of public organizations, private organizations, voluntary organizations, and invited individuals dedicated to reducing the incidence of and mortality from colorectal cancer in the U.S., through coordinated leadership, strategic planning, and advocacy. The goal of the NCCRT is to increase the use of proven colorectal cancer screening tests among the entire population for whom screening is appropriate. For more information visit: <https://nccrt.org/>

### Colon Cancer Coalition

In 2004, Kristin Lindquist started planning for the very first Get Your Rear in Gear® run after losing her best friend and sister, Susie Lindquist Mjelde, to colon cancer. What started as one woman's vision has since grown into a national coalition of people determined to end colorectal cancer deaths by increasing screening and educating others about the signs and symptoms of this treatable disease. The Colon Cancer Coalition wants all people to understand their risk factors and get the right screening at the right time. They achieve their goals by encouraging screening and raising awareness of colorectal cancer's signs and symptoms through their signature Get Your Rear in Gear run/walk events and Tour de Tush bike rides. Their primary goals include raising awareness, achieving eighty percent screening, and keeping funds local. For more information go to: <https://coloncancercoalition.org/>

## Resources

American Cancer Society. 2023. Colorectal Cancer. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/colon-rectal-cancer.html>.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2022. Colorectal Cancer. <https://www.cdc.gov/cancer/colorectal/>.

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George Washington Cancer Center; Cancer Control Technical Assistance Portal. February 2022. Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Campaign. <https://cancercontroltap.org/news/colorectal-cancer-awareness-month-campaign>. [Accessed 17 January 2023]

National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable 80% Colorectal Cancer Screening Rates in Every Community. <https://nc crt.org/80-in-every-community/#:~:text=We%20will%20continue%20working%20to,screening%20rates%20in%20e very%20community>.

National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable. 80% in Every Community Employer Guide. <https://nc crt.org/resource/employer-challenge-guide/>

National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable. 2022 Messaging Guidebook for Black and African American People: Messages To Motivate For Colorectal Cancer Screening. <https://nc crt.org/resource/steps-for-increasing-crc-screening-rates-2022/>

National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable. Steps for Increasing Colorectal Cancer Screening Rates: A Manual for Primary Care Practices. <https://nc crt.org/resource/steps-for-increasing-crc-screening-rates-2022/>

National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable. 2022. 80% Pledge. <https://nc crt.org/80-2018-pledge/>.

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NC DPH: NC Comprehensive Cancer Control Program Resource Hub. 2023. <https://publichealth.nc.gov/chronicdiseaseandinjury/cancerpreventionandcontrol/resourcehub.htm>

NC DPH: NC State Center for State Statistics. *North Carolina Cancer Projections*. Available at: <https://schs.dph.ncdhhs.gov/data/cancer/projections.htm> [Accessed 17 January 2023].

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES CONTACT:

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