

Colorectal Cancer Alliance Applauds Insurers Who Adopted New CRC Screening Guidelines Early

Insurance Providers Must Cover CRC Screening Starting at Age 45 by 2023; the Alliance Led a Grassroots Campaign for Coverage Now

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The rising rate of young-onset colorectal cancer (CRC) prompted [a major change in official screening guidelines](#) last May, when the

recommended age to start colorectal

cancer screening dropped from 50 to 45 years old for people at average risk. With a mission to end the nation's second deadliest cancer, the national nonprofit [Colorectal Cancer Alliance](#) (Alliance) celebrated the new, lifesaving guideline — and then got to work.

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Marcie Klein, Colorectal Cancer Alliance

According to the Affordable Care Act, health insurance payers have until 2023 to implement the new guideline and cover screenings. In response, the Alliance launched a grassroots campaign and delivered an urgent message to payers: “Tomorrow can't wait.”

The campaign, Op45, encouraged payers to cover colorectal cancer screenings starting at age 45 now. Today, the Alliance applauds every company that has chosen to combat the rise of young-onset CRC through screening

before required, including eight of the largest payers in the United States and many others.

“The new screening guideline provided a way for about 20 million Americans between the ages of 45 and 49 to protect their health from the devastating effects of colorectal cancer — the question was whether they could access it right away,” said Marcie Klein, Vice President of Prevention at the Alliance. “We commend insurance companies who are doing it right and



covering colorectal cancer screening at age 45, and we ask that other payers join them now. Lives are at risk.”

Since the mid-90s, the rate of young-onset colorectal cancer has increased 1.5% each year, according to the American Cancer Society. Today, more than 1 in 10 colorectal cancer patients are under the age of 50. [Screening can often prevent colorectal cancer](#) or catch it early, when it’s most treatable.

As part of Op45, Alliance volunteers executed about 800 advocacy actions, including calling payers directly as concerned members, posting on social media, and securing almost 200 television news stories across the country. In addition, the Alliance sent letters to payers and engaged individually with insurance executives.

“We just couldn’t wait until 2023,” said Ali Miller, Senior Director of Community Engagement at the Alliance. “Not when we know the suffering a delay in screening can cause. Our community knows that far too well.”

The American Cancer Society estimates there will be 151,030 new cases of colorectal cancer and 52,580 deaths from the disease in 2022.

The Alliance tracked the screening coverage of most large payers and can confirm coverage for colorectal cancer screening starting at age 45 by the following:

- UnitedHealth Group
- Kaiser Foundation
- Anthem
- Centene Corp
- Humana
- CVS Health (Aetna)
- Cigna Health
- Independence Health Group

Thousands of insurance payers exist, and the Alliance is limited in its ability to track all of them. If



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Tomorrow **can't wait**

an individual has questions about insurance coverage or colorectal cancer, they can call the Alliance's free Helpline at (877) 422-2030. Or find out which screening test is right for you at quiz.getscreened.org.

About the Colorectal Cancer Alliance

The Colorectal Cancer Alliance is a national nonprofit committed to ending colorectal cancer. Working with our nation of passionate allies, we diligently support the needs of patients and families, caregivers, and survivors; eagerly raise awareness of preventive screening; and continually strive to fund critical research. As allies in the struggle, we are fiercely determined to end colorectal cancer within our lifetime. For more information, visit ccalliance.org.

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