

Colorectal Cancer is Highly Treatable, Yet Minorities with the Disease are Dying at Higher Rates

Colorectal Cancer Alliance Expands Health Equity Efforts and Urges Prevention Awareness & Improved Access to Screening and Care among Minority Communities

WASHINGTON, D.C., USA, April 1, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- April is National Minority Health Month, a time to raise awareness about the importance of improving the health of racial and ethnic minority communities and reducing health disparities. Disparities in healthcare are widespread and associated with worse health outcomes because they limit access to

equitable screening and treatment for many, particularly Black Americans, American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/AN), and Hispanic Americans, who are disproportionately affected by colorectal cancer. These minority groups are in dire need of colorectal cancer awareness, prevention, and treatment assistance. As the leading nonprofit dedicated to colorectal cancer,



Minority populations are at greater risk for colorectal cancer.

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Angele Russell, Senior Director, Health Equity, Colorectal Cancer Alliance

the Colorectal Cancer Alliance (Alliance) is making health equity a priority in its mission to end the disease. The Alliance’s ongoing equity and access efforts in underserved communities have likely contributed to the decreased incidence rate gap between Black Americans and non-Hispanic whites from 25% to 15% over recent years.* However, the mortality rate remains higher, signaling there is a continued need to invest and focus efforts on minority populations.

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer

death in men and women combined, and the racial disparity in incidence has widened to 41% for

AI/AN individuals.** AI/AN people have the highest rate of colorectal cancer incidence and death, while Black Americans are 35% more likely to die from colorectal cancer and 15% more likely to develop it than non-Hispanic whites.*** These statistics underscore the urgency to spread awareness and action among minority communities who are at higher risk for the disease due to disparities. Healthcare disparities include poverty, language barriers, lack of insurance, lack of awareness, mistrust, missed wages, and limited access to screening services and transportation, among others.

“Colorectal cancer is highly treatable when caught early,” said Cedrek McFadden, MD, colorectal cancer surgeon and Alliance Medical Scientific Advisory Committee member. “Providing equity and access for minority and underserved communities with barriers to screening and care must be a priority to help decrease incidence and mortality rates.”

How the Alliance is Helping

To address disparities, the Colorectal Cancer Alliance created a Health Equity Fund and Health Equity Advisory Committee to forge partnerships that:

- offer free or low-cost screening options to more Americans in need,
- expand financial assistance for patients during treatment,
- enable innovative research to identify reasons for and solutions to disparities, and
- connect those most in need with high-quality and potentially lifesaving screening and treatment options.

“The Colorectal Cancer Alliance is committed to breaking down barriers to prevention, diagnosis, and treatment,” said Angele Russell, Senior Director of Partnerships & Health Equity, and leader of the Health Equity Advisory Committee at the Colorectal Cancer Alliance. “The Alliance’s Health Equity Fund and Health Equity Advisory Committee were established to address disparities in healthcare and provide free lifesaving screening and care resources to communities most affected by this deadly disease.”

Know The Risk Factors, Symptoms & Screening Options

During April’s National Minority Health Month, the Alliance urges minorities to know their family history and learn more about risk factors, symptoms, and screening options.

- Risk factors include being Black American, American Indian/Alaska Native or Hispanic American.
- Other risk factors include a family history of colorectal cancer, certain inherited genetic syndromes like Lynch syndrome, chronic inflammatory bowel diseases, such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn’s disease, and type 2 diabetes.
- Symptoms to look for include a change in bowel habits, rectal bleeding, abdominal discomfort, weakness and/or fatigue, and unexplained weight loss.
- The Alliance offers a free, easy quiz in both English and Spanish that provides a screening recommendation based on personal risk factors at quiz.getscreened.org.

Visit colorectalcancer.org/basics/health-equity to learn more and support the Alliance’s Health

Equity initiatives and impact.

About the Colorectal Cancer Alliance

The Colorectal Cancer Alliance empowers a nation of passionate and determined allies to prevent, treat, and overcome colorectal cancer in their lives and communities. Founded in 1999 and headquartered in Washington, D.C., the Alliance advocates for prevention, magnifies support, and accelerates research. We are the largest national nonprofit dedicated to colorectal cancer, and we exist to end this disease in our lifetime. For more information, visit colorectalcancer.org.

* <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/research/cancer-facts-and-statistics/colorectal-cancer-facts-and-figures/colorectal-cancer-facts-and-figures-2023.pdf>

** <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/34341050/>

*** <https://pressroom.cancer.org/releases?item=1303>

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