

Rising Rates of Early-Onset Colorectal Cancer Highlight Need for Screening and Coordinated Care

John Muir Health is committed to improving early detection, expanding access to care, and helping patients achieve the best possible outcomes.



CONCORD, CA, UNITED STATES, March

27, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Colorectal cancer is increasingly affecting younger adults, underscoring the urgent need for early screening, awareness, and access to high-quality, coordinated care. Once considered a disease primarily impacting people who are older, colorectal cancer is now rising among people under 50 – a trend that has drawn national

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*Dr. Piyush Aggarwal,
colorectal surgeon at John
Muir Health*

attention. Recent celebrity deaths associated with colorectal cancer have highlighted the growing impact of early-onset colorectal cancer and the importance of timely detection.

To counter this alarming trend, [John Muir Health](#) is advancing comprehensive, patient-centered care through its Multidisciplinary (MDC) [Colorectal Cancer Program](#), designed to streamline diagnosis and treatment while improving outcomes. John Muir Health’s MDC Colorectal Cancer Program was the first in the nation to earn accreditation from the National Accreditation Program for

Rectal Cancer (NAPRC) through the American College of Surgeons and remains the only program of its kind in Contra Costa County.

The program brings together a team of specialists — including colorectal surgeons, medical and radiation oncologists, and supportive care providers — to evaluate each patient in a single visit. This team-based approach allows for faster diagnosis, aligned treatment planning, and improved patient experience.

“Early-onset colorectal cancer is often more aggressive and diagnosed at later stages, which makes awareness and early detection absolutely critical,” said Dr. Piyush Aggarwal, colorectal

surgeon and Medical Director of the Gastrointestinal Oncology Program at John Muir Health. "Our multidisciplinary model ensures patients receive timely, coordinated care tailored to their individual needs."

John Muir Health's Rectal Cancer Program first earned [NAPRC accreditation](#) in 2018 and was re-accredited in 2023 and 2025. This distinction reflects a sustained commitment to delivering evidence-based, integrated care and achieving the highest standards in colorectal cancer treatment.

For John Muir Health employee Saskia Styles, screening made all the difference. After losing her father to stage 4 colon cancer, Styles followed updated screening guidelines and scheduled her first colonoscopy at age 45. During the procedure, physicians identified a large pre-cancerous polyp that required immediate removal, preventing it from developing into cancer.

"Looking back, I truly believe that taking action when I did may have saved my life," Styles said. "If I had waited, I could be facing a very different outcome today."

Her experience reinforces a critical message: colorectal cancer can develop without noticeable symptoms, especially in younger adults, making routine screening essential.

Health experts now recommend that average-risk individuals begin colorectal cancer screening at age 45—and earlier for those with a family history or other risk factors. Symptoms such as changes in bowel habits, abdominal pain, or unexplained weight loss should not be ignored, regardless of age.

Through its MDC program and continued investment in advanced cancer care, including the UCSF–John Muir Health Jean and Ken Hofmann Cancer Center, John Muir Health is committed to improving early detection, expanding access to care, and helping patients achieve the best possible outcomes.

About John Muir Health

John Muir Health is a nationally recognized, not-for-profit health care organization east of San Francisco serving patients in Contra Costa, Alameda, and Solano Counties. It includes a network of more than 1,000 primary care and specialty physicians, 6,400 employees, medical centers in Concord and Walnut Creek, including Contra Costa County's only trauma center, and an Acute Psychiatric Hospital. John Muir Health also has partnerships with UCSF Health, Tenet Healthcare/San Ramon Regional Medical Center, Stanford Medicine Children's Health and Optum. The health system offers a full-range of medical services, including primary care, outpatient, and imaging services, and is widely recognized as a leader in many specialties – neurosciences, orthopedic, cancer, cardiovascular, trauma, emergency, pediatrics, and high-risk obstetrics care.

John Muir Health's partnership with UCSF Health

John Muir Health and UCSF Health are working together to advance cancer care by identifying the most precise and effective therapies for each patient, and providing collaborative solutions for complex cases. This partnership strengthens our ability to offer seamless access to academic-level innovations, subspecialty expertise, and clinical trials close to home in Contra Costa County, while maintaining a highly coordinated and patient-centered approach to care. At the heart of our multidisciplinary colorectal cancer services is a team-based model that brings board-certified specialists together in one setting to review each case and develop a personalized treatment plan. This approach ensures that patients and their families receive comprehensive recommendations, timely guidance and support services that promote the best possible outcomes.

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