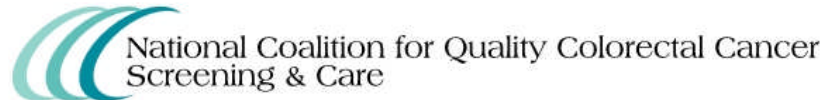


April 8, 2008

Contact: Kristin Solomon,
Communications Coordinator
Phone: (410) 777-5310
Email: info@preventingcolorectalcaner.org
Website: www.preventingcolorectalcaner.org



Non-Profit Group Formed to Promote Safe Colorectal Cancer Screenings and Care:
*Organization Will Address Increasing Concerns that Future Payment & Coverage Policies
Could Negatively Impact the Frequency of Colonoscopy Screening & Sedation Options*

Annapolis, Maryland / PRNewswire / April 8, 2008 - The National Coalition for Quality Colorectal Cancer Screening and Care, a 501(c) 6 not-for-profit association, announces the formation of a broad-based coalition dedicated to reducing the incidence of colorectal cancer through educational programs aimed at promoting colonoscopy screening and care options for patients in a safe and comfortable setting.

The Coalition, comprised of gastroenterologists, surgeons, primary care physicians, oncologists, anesthesiologists, patient advocacy groups, and concerned individuals, will support a sustained effort of advocacy, collaboration, research, and education geared towards key stakeholders, including the public. Coalition activities commenced in March as part of the National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

“A primary goal of the new organization is to promote evidence-based standards of care in a variety of medical practices that yield better clinical outcomes,” notes Steven J. Morris, MD FACP FACG, Chairperson of the Coalition and CEO of Atlanta Gastroenterology Associates. In addition, Dr. Morris adds that “the Coalition wants to ensure that quality is never compromised by minimizing physician input or by the arbitrary efforts of insurer to save dollars at the expense of human lives.” Dr. Morris recently accepted the nomination to head up the National Coalition for Quality Care and Cancer Screening and Care as its first Board Chairperson.

As reported by the American Cancer Society, colorectal cancer remains the second leading cause of cancer deaths. This year almost 150,000 Americans will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer and over 56,000 will die from this cancer. Colorectal cancer is one of the most treatable cancers if it is detected early, and screening with colonoscopy, the gold standard, is an effective tool in the fight against this deadly disease.

Stanford Plavin, MD, Vice Chairperson of the Coalition and managing partner of Ambulatory Anesthesia of Atlanta, states “It is tragic that many people avoid colorectal cancer screening due to fear or anxiety. Colorectal cancer screening can be achieved in an effective manner without discomfort. I encourage patients and providers to join us in this most important effort to maintain all effective options for colorectal cancer screening that will enable us to achieve higher screening rates and make a positive impact on cancer survival.”

“In order to achieve a higher colorectal cancer screening rate, physicians must be able to choose optimal forms of sedation to encourage patients to undergo screening colonoscopies,” elaborates Dr. Morris. He observes further that “75 percent of new colon cancer cases occur in persons with no known risk factors, regular colorectal cancer screenings are crucial to the prevention, early detection and successful treatment of this disease.”

The Coalition will work from a broad perspective to establish public policy consensus on the importance of physician and patient choice necessary for sustained improvement in colorectal cancer screening rates. One of the first written comments submitted by the Coalition relates to a proposed medical policy by Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Tennessee regarding the use of anesthesia services for routine gastrointestinal endoscopy. A copy of the Coalition’s letter to the health plan is available at www.preventingcolorectalcancer.org.

Membership categories have been identified for a full range of stakeholders. The Coalition is actively recruiting members to join the organization and serve on the Coalition’s Board of Directors and other committees. Tax-deductible contributions also can be sent to the Coalition.

To learn more about the activities of The National Coalition for Quality Colorectal Cancer Screening and Care, please visit www.preventingcolorectalcancer.org. You also can contact the Coalition at (866) 461-9296 (toll free) or at info@preventingcolorectalcancer.org.

* * * * *

Headquartered in Annapolis, Maryland, the National Coalition for Quality Colorectal Cancer Screening & Care (www.preventingcolorectalcancer.org) has been established to preserve the tradition of safe, comfortable and quality-based medicine. The mission of the Coalition is to educate the public and key stakeholders about the opportunities to reduce the incidence of colorectal cancer through maintaining screening and care options for patients.