



Resources for better healthcare

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**CIMRO of Nebraska Advocates for
Improved Colorectal Cancer Screening Rates**
March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Lincoln, Neb. (March 5, 2010) – This March marks the eleventh annual National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Colorectal cancer remains the third leading cause of cancer death in both men and women in the United States. CIMRO of Nebraska wants Nebraskans to know that wider use of proven screening tests could save more than half of these lives as colorectal cancer is one of the most preventable cancers.

The American Cancer Society estimated that 50,000 Americans would die from colorectal cancer in 2009. When colorectal cancers are detected early, the five-year survival is 90 percent; however only 39 percent of colorectal cancers are diagnosed at this stage, mostly because people aren't getting the necessary screening tests.

Colorectal cancer develops in the colon or the rectum. The colon and rectum are parts of the digestive system, which is also called the gastrointestinal, or GI, system. In most people, colorectal cancer develops slowly over several years. It typically begins as a non-cancerous polyp, which can change into cancer. Certain kinds of polyps, called adenomas, are the most likely to become cancerous.

One of the most powerful weapons to prevent colorectal cancer is regular screening. In many cases a screening can prevent colorectal cancer altogether because polyps can be detected and removed before they have the chance to turn into cancer.

Beginning at age 50, the American Cancer Society recommends that all men and women be screened for colorectal cancer. Medicare will pay for either 100 percent or 80 percent of the screening tests, depending on which one is performed.

CIMRO of Nebraska is currently working with primary care physicians in Nebraska to help them increase the number of people that are screened for colorectal cancer. "It's important that physicians recommend colorectal cancer screening to their patients. It's equally important for patients to follow through on their doctor's advice and get screened – it could save your life," said Dr. Audrey Paulman, CIMRO of Nebraska's Principal Clinical Coordinator.

CIMRO of Nebraska is an independent Quality Improvement Organization (QIO) under contract with CMS to work with Nebraska providers and Medicare beneficiaries to improve the quality of care for Nebraska Medicare beneficiaries.

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