Anthem Foundation Joins Forces with More Than 200 Local and National Organizations To Increase Colorectal Cancer Screening Rates across the Country

‘80 x 2018’ Is Shared Goal to Have 80% of Adults Aged 50 and Older Screened Regularly for Colorectal Cancer by 2018

ATLANTA (April 27, 2015) – The American Cancer Society announced today that the Anthem Foundation has made the pledge to help increase colorectal cancer screening rates by supporting the “80 by 2018” initiative led by the American Cancer Society, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable.

Colorectal cancer is the nation’s second-leading cause of cancer-related deaths for men and women combined. The disease hits minority populations particularly hard, with minorities more likely to be diagnosed with colorectal cancer in later stages of the disease when it is more difficult to treat. But the good news is that it’s one of only a few cancers that can be prevented. Through proper colorectal cancer screening, doctors can find and remove hidden growths (called “polyps”) in the colon, before they become cancerous. Removing polyps can prevent cancer altogether.

The Anthem Foundation is a proud supporter of the American Cancer Society to reduce cancer-screening disparities and increase community-based education for populations at greatest risk of adverse breast, cervical and colorectal cancer health outcomes. The Foundation’s pledge to help increase screening rates, further reinforces their commitment to help remove barriers and increase awareness, education and screenings.

The 80 by 2018 initiative is a National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable initiative in which more than 200 organizations have committed to eliminating colorectal cancer as a major public health problem and are working toward the shared goal of 80 percent of adults aged 50 and older being regularly screened for colorectal cancer by 2018. Leading public health organizations, such as the Society, CDC and the NCCRT are rallying organizations to embrace this shared goal.

“We know that eliminating inequalities in the health care system is vital to help ensure members of our communities remain healthy,” said Tracy Edmonds, chief diversity officer for Anthem, Inc. “We are proud to formally join the cause to help improve screening rates so we can help save lives and improve the health of individuals and families in the communities we serve. Working together, we can help to eliminate colorectal cancer as a major public health problem.”

“Colorectal cancer is a major public health problem, and adults age 50 and older should be regularly screened for it, but we have found that many people aren’t getting tested because they don’t believe they are at risk, don’t understand that there are testing options or don’t think they can afford it,” said Dr. Richard Wender, the American Cancer Society’s Chief Cancer Control Officer. “The truth is that the vast majority of cases of colorectal cancer occur in people age 50 and older. Colorectal cancer in its early stages usually has no symptoms, so everyone 50 and older should get tested. We know we can save many thousands more lives a year from colon cancer if we can reach

the 80 x 2018 goal.”

While colorectal cancer incidence rates have dropped 30 percent in the U.S. over the last 10 years among adults 50 and older, it is still the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States, despite being highly preventable, detectable and treatable. In fact, in 2014 in the U.S., 137,000 cases of colorectal cancer were diagnosed.

Part of the 80 percent by 2018 goal is to leverage the energy of multiple and diverse partners to empower communities, patients, and providers to increase screening rates. The 80 by 2018 initiative consists of health care providers, health systems, communities, businesses, community health centers, government, non-profit organizations and patient advocacy groups who are committed to getting more people screened for colorectal cancer to prevent more cancers and save lives.

About Anthem Foundation

The Anthem Foundation is the philanthropic arm of Anthem, Inc. and through charitable contributions and programs, the Foundation promotes the inherent commitment of Anthem, Inc. to enhance the health and well-being of individuals and families in communities that Anthem, Inc. and its affiliated health plans serve. The Foundation focuses its funding on strategic initiatives that address and provide innovative solutions to health care challenges, as well as promoting the Healthy Generations Program, a multi-generational initiative that targets specific disease states and medical conditions. These disease states and medical conditions include: prenatal care in the first trimester, low birth weight babies, cardiac morbidity rates, long term activities that decrease obesity and increase physical activity, diabetes prevalence in adult populations, adult pneumococcal and influenza vaccinations and smoking cessation. The Foundation also coordinates the company’s year-round Associate Giving program which provides a 50 percent match of associates’ pledges, as well as its Volunteer Time Off and Dollars for Doers community service programs. To learn more about the Anthem Foundation, please visit http://www.anthem.foundation and its blog at http://anthemfoundation.tumblr.com.

About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a global grassroots force of 2.5 million volunteers saving lives and fighting for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. As the largest voluntary health organization, the Society's efforts have contributed to a 22 percent decline in cancer death rates in the US during the past two decades, and a 50 percent drop in smoking rates. Thanks in part to our progress nearly 14.5 million Americans who have had cancer and countless more who have avoided it will celebrate more birthdays this year. We're determined to finish the fight against cancer. As the nation’s largest private, not-for-profit investor in cancer research, we’re finding cures and ensuring people facing cancer have the help they need and continuing the fight for access to quality health care, lifesaving screenings, clean air, and more. For more information, to get help, or to join the fight, visit cancer.org or call us anytime, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345.

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