

# National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable Honors Community Leaders for Efforts to Increase Screening

**Award honors individuals and organizations contributing to fight against colorectal cancer**

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**ATLANTA, March 3, 2022** - The National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (NCCRT), founded by the American Cancer Society (ACS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), is honoring leaders with the 2022 *80% In Every Community National Achievement Award*, given in recognition of distinguished, ongoing efforts to increase colorectal cancer screening rates across the United States.

Excluding skin cancers, colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in both men and women in the United States and the second most common cause of cancer deaths when men and women are combined.

"Colorectal cancer screening saves lives, but only if people get tested," said Steven Itzkowitz, MD, gastroenterologist with the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and NCCRT chair. "Nearly 1 in 3 adults are not up to date with colorectal cancer screening, but we are seeing tremendous progress toward [80% in Every Community](#), the national effort to increase screening rates to 80% and higher in communities across the nation. We are honored to recognize the dedication of these community leaders that share our goal of increasing access to life-saving colorectal cancer screening."

The *80% In Every Community National Achievement Award* includes one grand prize winner and five other honorees. Each receives a monetary award to be used to support continued efforts to increase screening for colorectal cancer.

"It's now more important than ever that we learn from these exemplary leaders as we continue to face challenges to cancer screening with the ongoing threat of COVID-19," said Emily Butler Bell, Director, NCCRT - Colorectal Cancer Interventions. "At the same time, we are energized by the challenge of increasing colorectal cancer screening rates with ACS and other major guidelines recommending colorectal cancer screening start at age 45."

This year's recipients include **Pueblo Community Health Center**, Pueblo, CO; **Hitting Cancer Below the Belt**, Richmond, VA; **Penn Medicine**, Philadelphia, PA; **Nebraska Cancer Coalition**, Lincoln, NE; **Senator Maryellen Goodwin and Representative Mia Ackerman**, Providence, RI; and **Access to Screening: A Colorectal Cancer Alliance Prevention Initiative**, Washington, DC.

Award winners will be recognized during the annual [NCCRT Colorectal Cancer Awareness](#)

[Month Webcast](#) on March 8 at 2:00 pm ET featuring Drs. Itzkowitz and Smith and other guests celebrating the successes of the 80% in Every Community initiative and sharing more about colorectal cancer screening. [Register](#) to attend the live webcast and learn more about increasing colorectal cancer screening rates.

More details about this year's recipients:

**\$3,000 Grand Prize Winner:**

**Category: Community Health Center**

**Pueblo Community Health Center, Pueblo, CO**

Founded in 1983, Pueblo Community Health Center provides primary care to largely lower income and racial and/or ethnic minority communities in and around Pueblo, CO. In 2019, PCHC selected colorectal cancer screening as a key performance measure to increase rates from a baseline of 54% in 2018. The COVID-19 pandemic struck three months into the work, but staff remained committed. Process improvements included developing provider champions to test and adapt new clinic workflows, reporting outcomes by provider, training medical assistants to educate and engage patients, utilizing case management and navigation staff to reduce barriers, adapting workflows to the telehealth environment, and postcard mailings. The screening initiative provided a focus in which staff and management could express their values for patient-focused care despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic. By 2021, screening rates had reached 62%. The same year, the Health Resources and Services Administration awarded PCHC a “Gold” Quality Award, placing it in the top 10% of health centers nationally.

**\$1,000 Honoree:**

**Category: Community Organization**

**Hitting Cancer Below the Belt (HCB2), Richmond, VA**

HCB2 is dedicated to colorectal cancer prevention in its hometown of Richmond and across the Commonwealth of Virginia. Established in 2013 after the founder’s husband, Rich Conklin, passed away from colorectal cancer, HCB2 engages thousands of community members, providing community education, early detection services for the uninsured, and support services for patients and survivors. In 2014, HCB2 began building and bridging screening resources for low-income, medically underserved individuals with a Free Colonoscopy Day program and FluFIT service. The organization then expanded their efforts by launching the HCB2 Free Clinic Colorectal Cancer Screening Program in 2017, which provides free fecal immunochemical tests (FITs) in partnership with nine free clinic and Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) sites. HCB2 has provided colorectal cancer education and affordable screening to over 2,550 medically underserved individuals through these efforts. HCB2 also works alongside the American Cancer Society, Cancer Action Coalition of Virginia, and the Virginia Colorectal Cancer Roundtable to enhance education throughout the region.

**\$1,000 Honoree:**

**Category: Hospital/Health System**

**Penn Medicine, Philadelphia, PA**

Penn Medicine, an academic medical center based in the University of Pennsylvania, strives to improve the health and well-being of people through research, education, clinical care, and community service. The health system includes six acute-care hospitals and hundreds of

outpatient locations throughout the region, serving patients across Southeastern Pennsylvania, Central Pennsylvania, and Southern New Jersey. In 2020, the health system created a system-wide goal focused on increasing colorectal cancer screening among Black patients in the Philadelphia region. Team leads implemented a multi-pronged effort across the primary care network with over 90 practices, including direct patient outreach, nearly 3,900 mailed fecal immunochemical tests (FITs), and navigation for patients with abnormal results. Penn Medicine also partnered with a Black-owned radio station on a media campaign and implemented six drive-through screening events in partnership with Enon Tabernacle Church, which serves 15,000 members. Despite the myriad of challenges posed by COVID, the team increased screening among Black patients across more than 90 clinics, reversing a previous disparity in screening rates. Penn Medicine is committed to continuing to grow and improve their colorectal cancer screening efforts.

**\$1,000 Honoree:**

**Category: Cancer Coalition/State Roundtable**

**Nebraska Cancer Coalition, Lincoln, NE**

The Nebraska Cancer Coalition (NC2) is Nebraska's statewide nonprofit cancer coalition, with a membership that includes health systems, providers, public health, nonprofits, patients, caregivers and survivors. In early 2020, NC2 founded the FightBackNE.org campaign with support from the Great Plains Colon Cancer Task Force to promote colorectal cancer screening to rural communities in Nebraska with lower screening rates. Using NCCRT's market research on messaging to the unscreened, NC2 conducted rural focus groups to test campaign messaging and materials, including posters/flyers/postcards, social media, and co-brandable T-shirts. The program expanded in 2021 with Spanish materials and a press toolkit. Despite challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, successes in 2021 included partnerships with 11 organizations; 54 estimated online earned media stories; and broadcast and social media placements, with 15.7k Facebook post impressions. In 2022, the campaign expanded to reach all 93 counties and includes messaging on screening at 45. Rural communities will have a focused effort targeting farmers, ranchers, and those in the agricultural community.

**\$1,000 Honoree:**

**Category: Elected Leaders**

**Senator Maryellen Goodwin and Representative Mia Ackerman, Providence, RI**

Senator Maryellen Goodwin and Representative Mia Ackerman of Rhode Island have demonstrated a longtime commitment to advocating for policies to fight cancer. In 2019, Sen. Goodwin and Rep. Ackerman partnered with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), Fight Colorectal Cancer, and other advocates, embarking on what would become the journey to pass a bill to remove out-of-pocket costs for colonoscopies following a positive non-invasive screening test. Just a few months later, the battle became a very personal one when Sen. Goodwin was diagnosed with colorectal cancer. Through treatment, she continued to serve in her role, relentlessly pursuing passage of the bill alongside Rep. Ackerman for three sessions. Ultimately, the bill was passed unanimously in 2021 and went into effect January 1, 2022. Removing this financial barrier will expand access to screenings and remove any financial disincentive for follow-up screenings. Sen. Goodwin and Rep. Ackerman also received ACS CAN's prestigious National Distinguished Advocacy Award in 2021.

**\$1,000 Honoree:**

**Category: Nonprofit Organization**

**Access to Screening: A Colorectal Cancer Alliance Prevention Initiative, Washington, DC**

The Colorectal Cancer Alliance exists to end colorectal cancer (CRC) in our lifetime, a mission that guides our programmatic pillars to screen, care, and cure. Early indications showed COVID-19 having a devastating effect on colorectal cancer screening. We have invested resources to increase awareness, deliver screening recommendations, and support patients through the screening process. In January 2021, the Alliance set a goal to deliver 20,000 clinically valid, personalized colorectal cancer screening recommendations within two years. The Alliance prioritizes unscreened and at-risk individuals, with a focus on populations that experience the highest colorectal cancer disparities, and we help patients understand screening options and improve access to screening through digital navigation ([quiz.getscreened.org](http://quiz.getscreened.org)) and personal contact with our team of certified patient and family support navigators. In the first year, the Alliance achieved 12.4 million media impressions, delivered 9,174 personalized screening recommendations, supported more than 4,000 people on their screening journey with live navigation, and facilitated more than 1,300 colorectal cancer screenings.

To learn more about the NCCRT, and the 80% In Every Community initiative, visit <https://nccrt.org/>.

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