

Chief Medical Officer Otis Brawley Responds to Medicare Decision on CT Colonography

Atlanta 2009/05/12 -Chief Medical Officer **Otis W. Brawley, M.D.** responds to Medicare's decision not to cover CT colonography "I am disappointed in this decision, as randomized clinical trials clearly show CT colonography (CTC) is as effective as optical colonoscopy for the early detection of early cancers and pre-malignant lesions. Medicare coverage for CTC, also known as virtual colonoscopy, would have provided an additional option for colorectal cancer screening. Additional options are absolutely necessary as the supply of gastroenterologists and other trained specialists is currently inadequate to supply optical colonoscopy to all of those who need it, and many people are unwilling to undergo colonoscopy or other currently reimbursed tests. It is our belief that by increasing the proportion of Americans 50 and over who get colorectal cancer screening, we could increase the number of lives saved from this devastating disease and decrease long term medical costs. Providing access to all proven screening options is even more important for those in the Medicare population, most of whom are at even greater risk of developing and dying from colorectal cancer due to their advanced age. The American Cancer Society still believes that a battery of different tests for colorectal cancer screening should be available to the American people. This includes optical colonoscopy, virtual colonoscopy, stool blood testing, as well as sigmoidoscopy."
