Family PLZ! Campaign Encourages Learning Your Family's Colon Cancer History

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Atlanta, GA – February 28, 2012 –The American Cancer Society is encouraging everyone to make a point to learn their family history of colon cancer, and reminding men and women 50 and older to get tested for the disease even if they have no family history. The Society is making it easier than ever to learn about your family history of colon cancer with the Family PLZ! campaign.

Colorectal cancer is highly treatable if found in its early stages. Most people should start getting screened for colorectal cancer at age 50, but people with a family history are at higher risk and may need to be screened earlier.

The Family PLZ! campaign, developed by the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (of which the Society is a founding member) provides tools to help you search and share your family history of colorectal cancer with your doctor and loved ones. The campaign encourages younger generations to participate in the discussions. Visit www.familyplz.org for more information.

"The Family PLZ! campaign is a great way for families to start a conversation about a family history of colorectal cancer," said Durado Brooks, M.D., M.P.H., director of prostate and colorectal cancer for the American Cancer Society. "Make a point to learn your family's history of colorectal cancer, colon polyps and other health issues, and tell your doctor what you learn."

An estimated 143, 460 cases of colorectal cancer are expected to occur in 2012, but there are steps you can take every day to stay well and reduce your risk of colon cancer. The American Cancer Society recommends that adults maintain a healthy weight by being physically active and eating a well-balanced diet. Limiting the amount of alcohol and limiting intake of processed and red meats are also steps you can take every day to reduce your risk of this disease.

Screening for colorectal cancer has been proven to reduce deaths from the disease both by decreasing the number of people who are diagnosed with it and by finding a higher proportion of cancers at early, more treatable stages. Overall, colorectal cancer rates have declined rapidly in both men and women in the past two decades, due in part to early detection and removal of precancerous polyps. However, nearly half of the U.S. population is not up to date on their colon cancer screening.

The American Cancer Society is making progress against colorectal cancer and is saving lives. Society-funded research has led to improved understanding regarding the link between diet and colorectal cancer, and the development of drugs to treat colorectal cancer. In addition, the Society and its advocacy affiliate, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action NetworkSM, are working to ensure that all Americans who need colorectal cancer testing and treatment have access to them. The Society recommends the following tests to find colorectal cancer

early:

Tests That Detect Adenomatous Polyps and Cancer
- Flexible sigmoidoscopy every 5 years, or
- Colonoscopy every 10 years, or
- Double contrast barium enema (DCBE) every 5 years, or
- CT colonography (CTC) every 5 years

Tests That Primarily Detect Cancer
- Annual guaiac-based fecal occult blood test (gFOBT) with high test sensitivity for cancer, or
- Annual fecal immunochemical test (FIT) with high test sensitivity for cancer, or
- Stool DNA test (sDNA), with high sensitivity for cancer, interval uncertain.

About the American Cancer Society
The American Cancer Society combines an unyielding passion with nearly a century of experience to save lives and end suffering from cancer. As a global grassroots force of more than three million volunteers, we fight for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. We save lives by helping people stay well by preventing cancer or detecting it early; helping people get well by being there for them during and after a cancer diagnosis; by finding cures through investment in groundbreaking discovery; and by fighting back by rallying lawmakers to pass laws to defeat cancer and by rallying communities worldwide to join the fight. As the nation's largest non-governmental investor in cancer research, contributing more than $3.5 billion, we turn what we know about cancer into what we do. As a result, about 11 million people in America who have had cancer and countless more who have avoided it will be celebrating birthdays this year. To learn more about us or to get help, call us any time, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.