Colon Cancer Awareness "Thunderclap" on March 29th Brings Together Social Media Power of Over 100 Groups

New Partnership Forged to Address Screening Barriers in Hispanic Communities

March 29, 2016 – "We know that in order to save more lives we need to drastically increase colon cancer screening rates among Hispanics. The question is, how do we help make that happen?", says Dr. Richard Wender, chief cancer control officer for the American Cancer Society.

"We are bringing together over 100 partners through social media to get the message out about the importance of screening for early detection and prevention of colon cancer. It's a life saving message for the one in two Hispanics who don't get this recommended screening," said Jane L. Delgado, PhD, MS, President and CEO of the the Alliance, the nation's leading Hispanic health advocacy group.

The *Nuestras Voces* (Our Voices) Network, an initiative led by the National Alliance for Hispanic Health (the Alliance), and the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (NCCRT), a coalition led by the American Cancer Society (ACS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, are teaming up for a social media "Thunderclap" to address colon cancer in Hispanic communities. Despite national progress on screening, statistics indicate that Hispanics are one of the groups least likely to be screened for colon cancer, even though it is the second leading cause of cancer-related death among Hispanics.

The Thunderclap will take place on March 29, 2016 at 12:00PM EST and will include messages in English and Spanish urging adults 50 and older to be screened for colon cancer. The messages will provide a link to information on screening from NCCRT and the Alliance's bilingual *Su Familia* Helpline that provides tailored information and referrals to screening and health services in the caller's community.

The Alliance and NCCRT are encouraging social media users to participate in the Thunderclap campaigns by posting the colon cancer awareness messages to social media on March 29TH:

- March is #coloncancer awareness month. Call 1-866-783-2645 today for life-saving screening info and referrals. http://thndr.me/RK3ZM7
- Marzo, mes de la concientización sobre el #cancerdecolon. La detección temprana salva vidas. Llame al 866-783-2645 http://thndr.me/9ZiKWy

So far, over 100 partners have signed up to send out the messages with a combined social media reach of over a million followers.

Large-scale efforts to increase colon cancer awareness are critical. Hispanics are one of the groups least likely to be screened for colon cancer, even though the disease is often preventable or detected early through screening. Nationwide, one in three adults between 50 and 75 years old are not screened as recommended, but among Hispanics, this number is closer to one in two. The NCCRT and the Alliance's *Nuestras Voces* Network, supported by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), have partnered to develop a series of efforts, including this month's Thunderclap, to reduce this disparity.

To understand and address unique barriers to colon cancer screening facing Hispanics, ACS and NCCRT conducted discussions with unscreened **Spanish-speaking Hispanics** 50 years of age or older in 2015. Focus group participants identified a number of unique barriers to screening, including low awareness of colon cancer and screening tests, limited knowledge that screening can prevent this disease, and low prioritization of one's health. **The full findings of this research have been summarized in a 2016 guide available online:** Hispanics/Latinos and Colorectal Cancer. NCCRT and the Alliance are using this information to shape future public health campaigns that will encourage Hispanics to be screened for colon cancer.

"The American Cancer Society is currently leading one of the most ambitious public health efforts of our time: to reach an 80% colon cancer screening rate by 2018. We know Hispanics are less likely to get screened, often

facing language or cultural barriers. This is why it's so important that we continue to develop unique messages that speak to those barriers. Lives depend on it, and we won't leave any group behind," says Dr. Richard Wender, chief cancer control officer for the American Cancer Society.

In 2016, over 134,000 cases of colorectal cancer are expected to be diagnosed in the U.S. and over 49,000 people are expected to die from this disease. However, colon cancer remains one of the only cancers that can be prevented through regular screening by the detection and removal of pre-cancerous polyps. Screening tests can also detect cancer early, when it is at its most treatable stage. Tests include colonoscopy or take-home kits that check for blood in the stool. ACS encourages adults at average risk for the disease to get the test that is right for them stating at age 50.

For more information on the Thunderclap on March 29TH, visit:

www.thunderclap.it/projects/39124-prevent-coloncancer?locale=en (English)
www.thunderclap.it/projects/39123-prevenga-el-c-ncerdecolon?locale=en (Spanish)