American Cancer Society National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable recognizes efforts to increase colorectal cancer screenings

ATLANTA, March 7, 2023 – Colorectal cancer is the third leading cause of cancer death in both men and women in the U.S. While screenings for colorectal cancer are an important step in saving lives, only 59% of adults aged 45 years and older are up to date with screenings. Today, the American Cancer Society National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (ACS NCCRT), founded in partnership with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), honored five organizations for their exceptional work to increase colorectal cancer screening rates across the U.S. with the 2023 80% In Every Community National Achievement Award.

"Screenings and early detection are crucial to saving lives from colorectal cancer," said Steven Itzkowitz, MD, gastroenterologist with the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and NCCRT chair. "The work being done by each of our award honorees to expand access to these life-saving screenings is exemplary, and we're thrilled to recognize their efforts."

According to Colorectal Cancer Statistics 2023, a new report by the American Cancer Society, an estimated 153,020 people will be diagnosed with colorectal in the U.S. in 2023. The report also found that the proportion of those diagnosed with advanced-stage colorectal cancer increased from 52% in the mid-2000s to 60% in 2019.

"Unfortunately, we've seen a shift toward more advance disease, while screening rates continue to remain low," said Dr. Arif Kamal, chief patient officer at the American Cancer Society. "While we must continue investing in research to discover new treatments for advanced-stage colorectal cancer, we must also work to increase screening rates. We applaud these organizations for their work to do just that."

The 80% in Every Community National Achievement Awards is a program designed to recognize individuals and organizations who are dedicating their time, talent and expertise to advancing needed initiatives that support the shared goal to reach colorectal screening rates of 80% and higher in communities across the nation. The awards include one grand prize winner and four other honorees, each of whom receives a monetary award to support continued efforts to increase colorectal cancer screenings.

This year's recipients include **CommUnityCare Health Centers & Dell Medical School at The University of Texas at Austin**, Austin, TX; **Colorado Cancer Screening Program**, Denver, CO; **Kintegra Health**, Gastonia, NC; **Ohio Association of Community Health Centers**, Columbus, Ohio; **Virginia Mason Franciscan Health**, Seattle, WA.

More details about this year's recipients:

Grand Prize Winner:
Category: Innovative Partnership

- **CommUnityCare Health Centers & Dell Medical School at The University of Texas at Austin**: CommUnityCare Health Centers, a Federally Qualified Health Center, provides medical and dental services to more than 123,000 Central Texas residents, including people whose income and lack of health insurance prevent them from accessing care elsewhere. Working in partnership with the University of Texas Austin's Dell Medical School and supported by funding from the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, the partnering organizations undertook a multi-year effort to increase colorectal cancer (CRC) screening among eligible CommUnityCare patients. The team implemented a multi-faceted intervention that featured mailed stool-based testing and bilingual, bi-cultural screening navigation to ensure positive (abnormal) Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) results were followed by timely colonoscopy. Since 2017, over 58,000 FITs have been sent out to age-eligible patients, and nearly 13,500 patients have completed testing. In under five years, CommUnityCare has doubled the proportion of patients up to date with CRC screening (from 19% to 44%) with no disparities based on insurance status, race, or ethnicity. To date, the program has detected 16 colorectal cancers (70% early stage) and removed over 195 adenomas.

Category: State-Based Screening Program

- **Colorado Cancer Screening Program**: Founded in 2006, the Colorado Cancer Screening Program (CCSP) is a statewide program of the University of Colorado Cancer Center, fueled by the academic and public health expertise of The Colorado School of Public Health and funding from the Cancer, Cardiovascular and Pulmonary Disease (CCPD) Grant Program. CCSP partners with Federally Qualified Health Centers, rural health clinics, and other safety net clinic systems to use evidence-based approaches to reduce disparities in CRC screening, lung cancer screening, and hereditary cancer risk assessment. Patient navigators and healthcare teams support low-income patients with overcoming barriers and increasing access to care through patient education, care coordination, client reminders and addressing social determinants to health. CCSP clinics have navigated average-risk and high-risk patients into 9,582 colonoscopies during the current grant cycle to-date (July 2018-June 2022) and >36,800 total colonoscopies since 2006. CCSP supports several clinic systems with strengthening their stool-based testing approaches and will soon be expanding the program to additional evidence-based interventions to further support efforts to reach 80% screening rates.

Category: Community Health Center

- **Kintegra Health:** Founded in 1991, Kintegra Health provides continuing comprehensive and accessible primary care services to individuals and families of all economic levels at over 30 practice sites in North Carolina. Following a drop in CRC screenings amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Kintegra Health began partnering with North Carolina Partnership to Increase CRC Screenings (NC PICCS), a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) program, to increase CRC screenings in four of the organization's practices in Lincolnton, Hickory, and Gastonia. In addition to receiving ongoing technical assistance from NC PICCS, the four practice sites participated in the American Cancer Society's Tri-state Quality Improvement Learning Collaborative developed aim statements; performed process mapping, gap analyses, and Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycles, which are an iterative process to test whether a change leads to an improvement; implemented evidence-based interventions, including patient reminders; and reduced structural barriers. Kintegra Health has successfully negotiated a colonoscopy cost rate well below the Medicare rate and developed a medical neighborhood for sustainability. Within a year, all four practices reported increased CRC screening rates ranging between 15 to 34 percentage points.

Category: State Primary Care Association

- **Ohio Association of Community Health Centers**: The Ohio Association of Community Health Centers (OACHC) supports all of Ohio's 57 Federally Qualified Health Centers and FQHC Look-Alikes (more commonly referred to community health centers or CHCs), providing care to nearly one million Ohioans across 480+ sites in 75 of the 88 counties. CHCs are non-profit health care providers that deliver affordable, quality comprehensive primary care to medically under-resourced populations, regardless of insurance status. OACHC leads many projects in support of improved patient outcomes through quality improvement initiatives. Since 2016, more than 25 CHCs have implemented FluFIT: a program where patients eligible for CRC screening are offered are offered a Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) at the time of their annual influenza vaccination. In collaboration with the regional American Cancer Society, OACHC provides participating CHCs with comprehensive training, technical assistance, and data collection tools. The performance for CHCs participating in the FluFIT program has grown from a rate of 32% screened in 2020 to 40% in 2021.

Category: Hospital/Health System

- **Virginia Mason Franciscan Health**: Virginia Mason Franciscan Health (VMFH) provides expert, compassionate medical care at 10 hospitals and nearly 300 care sites throughout the Puget Sound region of Washington State. In 2019, the Franciscan Medical Group (FMG), part of the VMFH system, set a goal to increase CRC screening rates to 70% and higher among patients served by its primary care sites in King,

Pierce, and Kitsap Counties. Working in partnership with the American Cancer Society as a Hospital Systems Capacity Building community of practice site, FMG used PDSA cycles to test and implement systems changes to increase CRC screening, including standardized outreach methods, shared decision making, data scorecards, and staff and patient education. FMG's Colorectal Cancer Screening Challenge, an annual eight-week initiative, also provides clinicians and staff with engaging incentives for meeting performance targets. CRC screening among the 85,000 patients eligible for CRC screening increased from 58% in February 2019 to 69% as of November 2022, a considerable achievement given the challenges to health care delivery posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

###

About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a leading cancer-fighting organization with a vision to end cancer as we know it, for everyone. For more than 100 years, we have been improving the lives of people with cancer and their families as the only organization combating cancer through advocacy, research, and patient support. We are committed to ensuring everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. To learn more, visit cancer.org or call our 24/7 helpline at 1-800-227-2345. Connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

About the American Cancer Society National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable

The American Cancer Society National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (ACS NCCRT) was established in 1997, in partnership with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. The ACS NCCRT is a national coalition of 190 member organizations with a shared mission to increase the use of proven screening tests among the entire population for whom screening is appropriate. The American Cancer Society provides organizational leadership and expert staff support to the ACS NCCRT.

For further information: Aleesia Forni, aleesia.forni@cancer.org