Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States among men and women combined, yet it’s one of the most preventable.

As a trusted community organization, you have the opportunity to educate and rally your members and stakeholders to help prevent colorectal cancer or find it early, when it’s small, has not spread, and treatment is most likely to be successful.

Join the national effort to get 80% of adults ages 50 or older regularly screened for colorectal cancer by 2018.

The number of colorectal cancer cases is dropping, thanks to screening. We are helping save lives. You can help.
Who is leading this effort? Led by the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable, the 80% by 2018 colorectal cancer screening initiative is bringing together more than 1,000 organizations to get 80% of adults ages 50 or older regularly screened for colorectal cancer by 2018.

How many lives can we touch? If we can achieve the 80% by 2018 goal, we would prevent 277,000 new cases and 203,000 deaths by 2030.

Here are five things you can do to support the 80% by 2018 initiative:

1. Partner with neighborhood organizations, physicians, hospitals, and local public health officials to make the initiative a communitywide goal.
   - Rally with other organizations to prioritize this effort. Get involved with your state cancer coalition1 or colorectal cancer roundtable to advance screening in your community. Contact your local American Cancer Society2 office or your local or state health department to learn about activities in your area.
   - Promote colon cancer screening at walk/runs, health fairs, and other community events.
   - Download videos, handouts, postcards, etc., and share this information with your constituents:
     » cancer.org/colon
     » nccrt.org/80by2018-Communications-Guidebook
     » nccrt.org/80by18 and nccrt.org/about/public-education/blue-star-marketing-kit/
     » cdc.gov/cancer/dcpc/publications/index.htm
   - Set a goal of partnering on the 80% by 2018 initiative with five other community organizations or businesses over the next six months.

2. Learn your community’s colorectal cancer screening rate, and set a goal for improvement.
   - By assessing where you are, you can measure and track your community’s progress and celebrate success!
   - You can also use this assessment to understand which groups in your community are not getting screened. This can help you target your efforts to reach those who are most in need of hearing the message about getting screened.
   - Your state or local health department may have this information. If not, the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable Evaluation 101 Toolkit3 offers advice about how to conduct a community assessment, lists available state and national screening data, and suggests ways to assess local progress.

Visit nccrt.org/about/80by2018-impact-by-state/ to find the screening rate and the estimated number of people needing screening in your state.

Check out the 80% by 2018 Resource Packet at nccrt.org/80by2018Packet to find helpful tools and resources.
3. Leverage local dignitaries/leaders, such as the mayor, a local news anchor, or a respected religious leader, to communicate with those in your community who are less likely to get screened and those who have a higher risk of colorectal cancer:

- Among the people less likely to get screened are those ages 50 to 64, Hispanics, American Indians, Alaska Natives, rural populations, men, and those with lower education and income.

- African Americans are at a higher risk for colorectal cancer, have higher death rates, and are diagnosed at a younger age than any other population.

- Work with others in your community to develop a plan to get colorectal cancer screening education and resources to members of these high-need groups in your community. Local American Cancer Society staff, local health departments, and comprehensive cancer control coalitions are some of the partners who will want to work with you!

4. Designate relevant spokespeople.

- Physicians are an important avenue for delivering the message about getting screened.
  - People who have been screened often say they did so because their doctor told them to do it.
  - “My doctor didn’t tell me to get screened” is the primary reason given by African Americans and the third most common reason given by Hispanics for not getting tested.

- Help make screening relevant and personal. Local survivors can be especially compelling messengers.
  - People who have not been screened for colorectal cancer are much less likely to have a close friend or family member with cancer than those who have been screened.
  - Local survivors can help make the importance of screening real for those who have not otherwise been affected by colorectal cancer. Visit nccrt.org/80by18-Survivors for tips on how to engage survivors and their families in your efforts.

5. Commit to educating your community on colorectal cancer screening options, reimbursements, and local resources.

- Communicate the importance of colorectal cancer screening to everyone 50 years of age or older, providing materials that educate them on these important facts about colorectal cancer and screening options:
  - Colorectal cancer screening tests can help find precancerous polyps, and in some cases, cancer can be prevented by finding and removing these growths.
  - When people get screened for colorectal cancer, it can often be found early, at a stage when treatment is most likely to be successful.
  - There are several recommended screening options, including: colonoscopy, stool tests (guaiac fecal occult blood test [FOBT], fecal immunochemical test [FIT], stool DNA testing), and CT colonography.
  - Colorectal cancer screening is covered by insurance under the Affordable Care Act, in many instances with no out-of-pocket costs.

- Know the resources and support available in your area to recommend affordable options for colorectal cancer screening.

Your organization has the power to have a huge impact on colorectal screening rates in your community!

Visit cancer.org/colon or nccrt.org/80by2018 to learn more about the 80% by 2018 colorectal cancer screening initiative.
Sources