



## WILL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT & COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

### For Immediate Release

March 7, 2011

**News media calls to Vic Reato: Media Services Manager at (815)727-5088.**

Agency Website: [www.willcountyhealth.org](http://www.willcountyhealth.org)

Twitter: WillCoHealth

### HEALTH DEPARTMENT URGES COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING

**JOLIET** — Science and technology are winning the fight against colorectal cancer, but many Americans still avoid simple screening tests that could save their lives.

Cancers of the colon and rectum will kill approximately 56,000 Americans during 2011, even though several safe and effective screening options can dramatically reduce personal risk. The Will County Health Department urges area residents, especially those over the age of 50, to consult a health care professional about the need for colorectal cancer screening.

According to a recent study conducted in conjunction with the National Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, nearly 57 percent of Americans older than age 50 still ignore screening tests that can detect colon cancer at a treatable stage. The decision to forego these painless tests is puzzling to health care experts, particularly since Medicare will foot the bill for eligible residents.

More than 135,000 Americans will develop colorectal cancer this year. Colorectal cancers remain the second leading cause of U.S. cancer deaths, even though screenings can reduce the likelihood of a fatal case by 90 percent.

Four screening tests are available, and all of them are useful tools capable of detecting potential problems at an early stage. Screening procedures (colonoscopy is one of the most common screenings) help by detecting tiny pre-cancerous growths called polyps. These growths can line the wall of the large intestine if undetected. By removing polyps before they mature, physicians are able to keep the risk of cancer development extremely low.

A family history of colorectal cancer can influence the potential for disease development. Inherited forms of colorectal cancer account for approximately 20 percent of all cases and can greatly increase the likelihood of cancer involvement at an earlier age.

The incidence of U.S. colon cancer has decreased significantly since 1990, thanks principally to the increased popularity of screening procedures. The biggest challenge currently facing health professionals is convincing the remaining skeptics about the need for routine preventive screenings.

PAGE 1 OF 2



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

*Main Office*  
501 Ella Avenue  
Joliet, IL 60433  
Ph 815.727.8480  
Fx 815.727.8484

*Community Health Center*  
1106 Neal Avenue  
Joliet, IL 60433  
Ph 815.727.8670  
Fx 815.727.8852

*Eastern Branch Office*  
44 Towncenter  
University Park, IL 60466  
Ph 815.727.8803  
Ph 708.534.0800  
Fx 708.534.3455

*Northern Branch Office*  
323 Quadrangle Dr.  
Bolingbrook, IL 60440  
Ph 630.679.7000  
Fx 630.679.7015

March has been designated as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in hopes of promoting the need for routine screening. The annual promotion is spearheaded by the Colorectal Cancer Research and Prevention Foundation in collaboration with the American Society of Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, the Foundation for Digestive Health and Nutrition, and the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable.

For more information about colorectal cancer screening, visit [www.preventcancer.org](http://www.preventcancer.org).