

President Joseph R. Biden Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

January 16, 2024

Dear Mr. President:

We thank you for previously recognizing March as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, for reigniting the Cancer Moonshot to end cancer as we know it, and for your leadership and commitment to the cancer community in the United States. We ask that you once again **show your support by recognizing March as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and by lighting the White House blue, the official color of colorectal cancer, to honor those we have lost and those fighting this disease.**

This time of year, the colorectal cancer community begins to prepare for the month of March, a time when we come together to shed light on the devastating impact of this disease. March was officially designated National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month by the House, Senate and White House in 1999 after extensive advocacy by the colorectal cancer community. It is an opportunity for advocates to share their experiences, for physicians to speak to their patients about colorectal cancer, and for the colorectal cancer community to come together and raise awareness about the second leading cause of cancer death for men and women combined.<sup>1</sup>

Colorectal cancer is often thought of as a disease that only affects older people, but the face of colorectal cancer is changing. Over the last four decades, colorectal cancer has been steadily increasing in young people, and in 2030, it is on track to become the number one cancer killer of persons 20 - 49 years old.<sup>2</sup> Colorectal cancer also disproportionately impacts people of color. According to the American Cancer Society, African Americans are 20% more likely to be diagnosed with colorectal cancer and 40% more likely to die from it compared with other racial groups. American Indian/Alaskan Natives have elevated colorectal cancer incidence and death rates compared to other populations and represent the only racial/ethnic group for whom colorectal cancer mortality rates are not declining.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, colorectal cancer is expected to account for 11% of cancer deaths among Hispanic men and 9% of cancer deaths for Hispanic women.<sup>4</sup> This doesn't have to be our reality.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/colon-rectal-cancer/about/key-statistics.html#:~:text=In%20the%20United%20States%2C%20colorectal,about%2052%2C550%20deaths%20during%202023>.

<sup>2</sup> Rahib, L., Wehner, M. R., Matrisian, L. M., & Nead, K. T. (2021). Estimated Projection of US Cancer Incidence and Death to 2040. *JAMA network open*, 4(4), e214708. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2021.4708>

<sup>3</sup> American Cancer Society. (2020). Colorectal Cancer Facts & Figures 2020-2022. American Cancer Society. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/research/cancer-facts-and-statistics/colorectal-cancer-facts-and-figures/colorectal-cancer-facts-and-figures-2020-2022.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> American Cancer Society. (2018). Colorectal Cancer Facts & Figures for Hispanics/Latinos 2018-2020. American Cancer Society. Retrieved from <https://www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/research/cancer-facts-and->

Colorectal cancer is unique in that if it is detected early through screening, it can be effectively treated through surgery and/or chemotherapy and radiation or even prevented completely. Unfortunately, far too many Americans are not getting screened. Currently there are more than 20 million Americans eligible for colorectal cancer screening who have not been screened, with that number expected to grow even larger with the recommended screening age being lowered to 45.<sup>5</sup> It is estimated that tens of thousands of colorectal cancer deaths could be avoided if people are screened appropriately.<sup>6</sup> Fortunately, colorectal cancer has numerous screening modalities and increasing colorectal cancer screening rates can contribute to the bold goals set by your Cancer Moonshot.

The undersigned organizations represent thousands of colorectal cancer patients, survivors, and advocates. We will continue to fight and we urge you to join us. Please continue to recognize March as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in 2024 and light the White House blue to honor the colorectal cancer community and help us raise awareness around this disease. Together, we can change the statistics around colorectal cancer.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Fight Colorectal Cancer

AliveandKick'n

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

American College of Gastroenterology

American Gastroenterological Association

American Indian Cancer Foundation

American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy

California Colorectal Cancer Coalition

CDC National Network: SelfMade Health Network (SMHN)

Cheeky Charity

Collaborative Group of the Americas on Inherited Gastrointestinal Cancer (CGA-IGC)

Colon Cancer Coalition

Colon Cancer Prevention Project

Colorectal Cancer Alliance

Colorectal Cancer Equity Foundation

FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered

Georgia Center for Oncology Research and Education

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statistics/cancer-facts-and-figures-for-hispanics-and-latinos/cancer-facts-and-figures-for-hispanics-and-latinos-2018-2020.pdf

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2013/p1105-colorectal-cancer-screening.html#:~:text=About%20one%20in%20three%20adults,for%20Disease%20Control%20and%20Prevention>.

<sup>6</sup> Meester, R. G., Doubeni, C. A., Lansdorp-Vogelaar, I., Goede, S. L., Levin, T. R., Quinn, V. P., Ballegooijen, M. v., Corley, D. A., & Zauber, A. G. (2015). Colorectal cancer deaths attributable to nonuse of screening in the United States. *Annals of epidemiology*, 25(3), 208–213.e1. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.annepidem.2014.11.011>

GH Foundation  
GI Cancers Alliance  
Hitting Cancer Below the Belt  
Man Up To Cancer  
Mountains of Hope Cancer Coalition  
National Coalition for Cancer Survivorship  
National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN)  
National LGBT Cancer Network  
Nebraska Cancer Coalition  
Nevada Cancer Coalition  
Prevent Cancer Foundation  
Raymond Foundation  
Ruesch Center for the Cure of GI Cancers/Georgetown University  
Taking Aim at Cancer in Louisiana  
United Ostomy Associations of America, Inc.  
Washington Colon Cancer Stars  
West Virginia University Cancer Institute