

March is Colon Cancer Awareness Month

Save Lives, Promote Colon Cancer Awareness and Dress in Blue March 2, 2012

The Kentucky Cancer Program District Cancer Council is launching the fourth annual public awareness campaign to increase colon cancer screening with Dress in Blue Day on March 2nd. New this year, Madeline Abramson, the Lieutenant Governor's wife, will serve as the Dress in Blue Day Honorary Chair for Kentucky. She will join KCP Council partners and numerous other organizations, businesses, schools and churches throughout the community to encourage everyone to wear blue. Activities will continue throughout the year to provide education and special programs.

Few cancers are as easily prevented as colon cancer. Yet in Kentucky, about 2,600 new cases will be diagnosed each year and almost 900 people will die. March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, time to call your doctor and ask about a screening test that's right for you. Routine screening is highly effective.

The burden of colorectal cancer in our state is significant. Kentuckians are diagnosed at a higher rate than most of the nation and the mortality rate is among the highest. Colon cancer remains the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the state.

Early colon cancer usually has no symptoms, so it's important to be screened. Age is the most common risk factor. It is recommended that everyone age 50 and older be screened. If you have a personal or family history of cancer, or certain risk factors such as polyps (growths) or inflammatory bowel disease, you should check with your doctor about getting screened at an earlier age.

There are several different tests for colon cancer. Some can be done at home to check for hidden blood in the stool. Other tests must be done in a healthcare facility by a physician and may use x-rays or a thin flexible tube to examine part or all of the colon. Most insurance plans, Medicaid and Medicare help cover the cost.

Dress in Blue - tell your friends why and call your doctor today to make an appointment. Don't let fear, embarrassment or any other reason keep you from taking the next step.

Special Dress in Blue announcements and free colon cancer screening posters and materials are available from the Kentucky Cancer Program while supplies last. Visit www.kycancerprogram.org/special-events "What's New" for additional information and resources or contact (organization name and phone number).