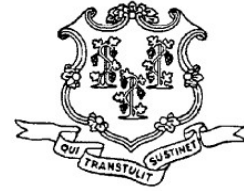


News



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 5, 2010

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Connecticut Department of Public Health Launches Colorectal Cancer Screening Campaign

Stay In The Game CT Campaign Designed to Raise Awareness of the Importance of Colorectal Cancer Screenings

Hartford – While Connecticut is the proud home of many top ranked men’s and women’s sports teams, no one wants to have a top ranking when it comes to cancer. The state ranks 13th in the nation for new colon cancer rates for men and 11th for women. The Connecticut Department of Public Health hopes to improve those “stats” with *Stay In The Game CT*, a new statewide media and public education campaign designed to increase awareness of colorectal cancer and promote cancer screenings among Connecticut residents age 50 and older.

According to state health officials, colorectal cancer is the 4th most common cancer diagnosed in Connecticut men and the 3rd most common cancer diagnosed in Connecticut women. It is also the 3rd leading cause of cancer-related death in both Connecticut men and women. While the benefits of early screening are well known, 30% of Connecticut residents over the age of 50 had never been screened by colonoscopy or sigmoidoscopy in 2008.

Dr. J. Robert Galvin, commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Public Health, knows the importance of regular colorectal cancer screenings. “Colorectal cancer almost always develops from precancerous polyps – abnormal growths – in the colon or rectum,” Dr. Galvin said. “Research shows that screening for colorectal cancer as recommended helps prevent this disease by finding and removing precancerous polyps before they become cancerous.”

Stay In The Game CT was designed around the idea that the best defense is a good offense – this is true in sports, and it’s true when it comes to preventing colorectal cancer. After all, if detected early, colorectal cancer is highly curable – which makes screenings a great way to ensure that people “stay in the game” of life. That’s why *Stay In The Game CT* encourages people to get screened as soon as they turn 50 – or earlier for minorities who are even more at risk – and to continue getting screened regularly.

Dr. Joe Anderson, a colorectal cancer expert at the UConn Health Center, says that everyone – not just people who might be genetically predisposed to the disease – needs to take charge of their colorectal health. “Connecticut residents need to pay attention to the life-saving messages of the *Stay In The Game CT* colorectal cancer awareness campaign. People think they don’t have

to worry about colorectal cancer if they don't have a family history. This is wrong. Everyone, starting at the age of 50, needs to get screened."

Some of the "star players" from UConn Athletics will also be assisting *Stay In The Game CT* in spreading its message. The campaign includes such recognizable faces as UConn Women's Basketball coaches Geno Auriemma and Chris Daily, who will be featured in public service announcements that will air statewide on television and radio stations through the end of 2010.

The "hub" of *Stay In The Game CT* is StayInTheGameCT.com. This website is a comprehensive source of information on colorectal cancer, cancer screenings, and resources, including helpful tips about where and how people can get screened, and what they can expect. The site also features an "Ask the Doctor" page, where visitors can anonymously submit their own colorectal health questions to Dr. Joe Anderson. The website also includes an e-toolkit that healthcare providers can access to get information for their patients. Downloadable public service announcements, flyers, on-demand viewing of the *Confronting Colorectal Cancer* town meeting, contact information for colorectal cancer screening providers, and additional materials are available on the website to help healthcare professionals spread the word about the importance of getting screened.

Confronting Colorectal Cancer premieres on CPTV on Wednesday, March 24 at 8 p.m., with rebroadcasts scheduled to air on Friday, March 26 at 10 p.m. and Sunday, March 28 at 2:30 p.m. The program will also be archived online at StayInTheGameCT.com. *Confronting Colorectal Cancer* will include an interactive panel discussion with expert healthcare providers about critical colorectal health issues. During the program, viewers will be able to contribute their questions and comments to the discussion by calling 800-842-2788, or e-mailing stayinthegame@cptv.org. Also, a phone bank staffed by healthcare caseworkers will be on hand so that viewers with specific questions can receive professional, confidential assistance.

The Connecticut Department of Public Health is the state's leader in public health policy and advocacy with a mission to protect and promote the health and safety of the people of our state. To contact the department, please visit its website at www.ct.gov/dph or call (860) 509-7270.

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