

UW-Madison Carbone Cancer Center: Joins national colorectal cancer screening effort

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CONTACT: Susan Lampert Smith

March 24, 2017 (608) 890-5643, ssmith5@uwhealth.org

MADISON, Wis. — Colorectal cancer screening is proven to save lives, but rates in rural Wisconsin and among people in the Native American, African-American, Hmong and Hispanic populations are not where they should be.

The UW Carbone Cancer Center (UWCCC) is a partner in the National Cancer Institute's new nationwide effort to increase colorectal cancer screening. The new effort is called "Screen to Save" (S2S).

Colorectal cancer is the fourth most common type of cancer in men and women in the United States and is the second leading cause of death from cancer. Approximately 135,000 people are diagnosed with CRC each year in this country, and about 50,000 die from it.

"Screening for colorectal cancer is proven to save lives," says Dr. Tracy Downs, a UW Health cancer surgeon who heads the UW's Cancer Health Disparities Initiative (CHDI). "We want everyone to know that screenings should begin when you are 50, or younger if you have a family history of colorectal cancer (CRC), and continue through age 75."

Staff from CHDI will deliver culturally tailored CRC outreach and education activities at events throughout the state. Rick Strickland, program director at CHDI, says the first outreach event will take place at the 14th annual Share the Care American

Indian cancer conference scheduled for May at the Red Cliff Tribe in Bayfield County.

UW Carbone is one of 49 cancer centers nationwide taking part in the S2S effort. CHDI plans to work primarily in rural and American Indian communities.

The Wisconsin Comprehensive Cancer Control Program, also housed at UWCCC, is in its second year of a five-year project to promote CRC screening through Federally Qualified Health Centers. This work is occurring in Milwaukee and has recently expanded to Madison with Access Community Health Centers.

Additional efforts to expand CRC screening and S2S to more sites will continue to be explored. For more information on UWCCC's S2S initiative, contact Cody Fredrick, CHDI's Community Health Educator and rural-project coordinator at cfredrick@uwcarbone.wisc.edu.