

MEDICAL SOCIETY ^{OF} THE COUNTY OF ERIE

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In re: Fight Colorectal Cancer: The Medical Society of Erie County stands in support of Buffalo Colon Corps

Buffalo Colon Corps is an advocacy organization working with Roswell Park to advocate for NYS legislation to lower the age (from 50 years to 45 years of age) where NYSDOH covers screening colonoscopies for un/under-insured patients, which is consistent with ACS guidelines. The mission of the Medical Society of Erie County is to serve the best interests of the physician and patient community of Erie County at-large by creating a viable platform for physicians and patients to articulate and escalate issues that impact the community and to collaborate with regional stakeholders to resolve those issues through collective action.

As New York State Department of Health Commissioner, Dr. Howard Zucker recently noted in his September 2020 Letter to County Health Commissioners, Colorectal cancer (CRC), despite being one of the most preventable cancers, still accounts for nearly 9,000 new cases every year in New York State and affects all genders, races and ages. Although most people diagnosed with CRC are age 50 and older, 11% of those annual cases in NYS occur in people younger than 50. This trend is magnified nationally with the incidence of CRC in individuals under age 50 increasing 1.8% per year and in a cumulative effect, a 51% increase in colorectal cancer among those under 55 since 1994. Since many colorectal cancers are found through screening, and screening is far less common in adults in their 40s than those in their 50s, the true underlying risk may be higher than the most recent age-specific rates would suggest.

The average age of colorectal cancers is dropping. Steadily increasing rates of colorectal cancer in younger populations, identified in the 2018 National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (NCCRT) and American Cancer Society (ACS) data, underscores the need to review current screening guidelines.

The Medical Society of Erie County feels strongly that the latest colorectal data supports a compelling basis to provide screening coverage starting from age 45 rather than 50 for average risk individuals. In concert with the NYS Department of Health, the Medical Society believes that coverage for earlier intervention will save more lives by detecting colorectal cancer early, when treatment is more likely to be successful, and by detecting and removing polyps, which contributes to the prevention of colorectal cancer.

The Medical Society of Erie County believes New York State should work to ensure that coverage is in place for colorectal cancer screening starting at age 45, consistent with ACS guidelines, and are privileged to stand alongside the noble mission of the Buffalo Colon Corps and its partners to improve the health and well-being of our community.

Sincerely,

Aimana ElBahtity, Esq.
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Medical Society of Erie County
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