MINNEAPOLIS - The American Indian Cancer Foundation (AICAF) would like to announce big news in screening for colorectal cancer across Indian Country! Based on new data showing increasing rates of colorectal cancer in younger populations, the American Cancer Society announced new guidelines that colorectal cancer screenings should begin at age 45 (previously age 50) for people at average risk. Kristine Rhodes, AICAF CEO shares, “Our organization has been a strong advocate to get screened for colorectal cancer younger for American Indians and Alaska Natives, since we began our work in 2011. ACS officially recommending screening to start at age 45 years strengthens our current cancer prevention efforts and brings us a step closer to eliminating the cancer burden in our communities.”

Nationally, colorectal cancer is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer among American Indian men and women and the second leading cause of cancer death. In the Northern Plains, colorectal cancer rates are 53% higher than non-Hispanic whites.

The American Cancer Society updated the guideline to save more lives by finding colorectal cancer earlier. AICAF has advocated for screening American Indian and Alaska Natives beginning at 45 because onset of colorectal cancer is usually younger than 50. Screening early is important because there are usually no symptoms of colorectal cancer until it’s too late. Screening saves lives by finding and removing polyps before they can turn into cancer. If found early, 9 out of 10 survive, but if found late, only 1 out of 10 survive. AICAF will continue to voice the importance of screening early and work with partners to ensure coverage is available for this age group.

Updated guideline.
Find out more information about the new screening age recommendations for those at average and high risk by visiting the American Cancer Society’s website.

Get screened.
The best test is the one that gets done. Recommendations for screening test options are part of the guideline change. The new guideline emphasizes personal preference and choice in testing options and strongly supports follow-up if there is an abnormal result.

Learn.
Discover resources on colorectal cancer and how to prevent cancer in American Indians at americanindiancancer.org/resources. Updated colorectal cancer resources will be available soon.

Share.
Tell your friends and family about colorectal cancer. Encourage them to seek screening and to adopt healthy habits.
Join our community.
Like the American Indian Cancer Foundation on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and sign up for our newsletter.

Donate.
Any amount helps the American Indian Cancer Foundation continue to raise colorectal cancer awareness, increase early detection and build a network for American Indians and Alaska Natives.

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The American Indian Cancer Foundation (AICAF) is a national, Native-governed, 501(c)3 nonprofit health organization dedicated to improving access to prevention, early detection, treatment, and survivor support to eliminate the cancer burdens experienced by American Indian and Alaska Native people. AICAF partners with tribal and urban organizations to co-create effective and sustainable cancer solutions that are culturally appropriate.

AICAF believes Native communities possess the wisdom to find innovative solutions that are community centered to address cancer inequities. AICAF provides capacity building through training, technical assistance, and resources to tribal and urban partners to achieve these shared objectives. AICAF.org