

Proclamations 101 Toolkit



Request a proclamation from your state and city officials acknowledging March as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, and help turn the entire country blue!

WHAT is a proclamation?

A proclamation officially designates March as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and is issued by a state, city, or county official.

WHY are proclamations important?

Proclamations can be very effective in building awareness in your community or state. With every proclamation, you can send out local press releases and letters to editors, which helps spread awareness to the general public and local community!

Proclamations are important to the mission of the colorectal cancer community because they allow advocates to establish relationships with government officials. Advocates, having formed this relationship, can later request support for more substantive measures.

WHO and WHERE should I request proclamations from?

- The mayor
- The governor
- The state legislature
- Your county council or county executive, or your city council
- Other jurisdictions unique to your area (like boroughs, parishes, etc.)

When you request a proclamation, you are simply asking them for a stamp of approval for Awareness Month. The offices you call will likely be excited to help because a proclamation isn't controversial. It's a win-win for us AND for them!

WHEN should I start requesting them?

Ideally, we want the proclamations BEFORE March so we can get as much leverage out of them as possible. The process takes an average of 60 days to complete, but we suggest that you start early. Start today, and help us turn every state blue in 2011!

HOW do I request them?

It's easy! Our online 2011 Proclamation Toolkit contains all of templates you need. Using the toolkit (<http://link.fightcrc.org/proclamations101>) you can download the sample cover letter, proclamation, and press release you will need to get started. Once you have these sample documents, you simply e-mail or call your government office to get contact information, submit your request and remember to check in with us every step of the way to update the status of the requests.

READY TO GET STARTED?

E-mail us at Advocacy@FightCRC.org and let us know where you will be requesting a proclamation. And if you need any help along the way, drop us an e-mail or give us a call at 703-548-1225 ext. 12.

Checklist for Submitting & Securing a Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Proclamation

1. If you don't have contact information for your Governor type the following phrase into a search engine (like Google) see what comes up. Phrase: "submitting a proclamation request to Governor [your Governor's name] [your state name]." If you have difficulty finding the contact information for your Governor, contact us at Advocacy@FightCRC.org and we will help you get the contact information you need.
2. Once you have the contact information for state governor's office, initiate contact and find out:
 - the protocol and timeline for requesting a proclamation
 - name and contact information for the administrative assistant in charge of proclamation requests
 - if any other group or organization has already submitted a request for a Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month proclamation
 - if there is a signing ceremony with the governor and, if so, the date and time
 - how to submit some draft language (fax, e-mail, snail mail)
3. If another group or organization has already submitted a request for a Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month proclamation, ask the Governor's office contact if the Colorectal Cancer Coalition's name can be added to the list of supporters in the proclamation language.
4. If no other group or organization has submitted a request, you can either proceed with submitting your request.
5. Download the proclamation template (available online at <http://link.fightcrc.org/proclamations101>). Fill in the blanks with the needed information and then save as a Word file on your computer so you can print it, fax it, e-mail it or mail it, as needed.
6. Download the cover letter (online at <http://link.fightcrc.org/proclamations101>). Fill in the blanks with the needed information and then save it as a Word file on your computer desktop.
7. After a week, check back with the Governor's office contact to make sure the request was received. At that time also confirm the following:
 - When the final version on the proclamation will be ready
 - Date, time, and locale for signing ceremony - be sure to ask is there will be an official photographer present and, if so, how you can get order a copy of the official photo.
 - If there is no signing ceremony, request that the office send the finished proclamation directly to you as soon as it is finished. Be sure your contact information is included on all correspondence. And, it can't hurt to ask if there is any possibility the Governor will pose for a photo with you at his/her convenience.
8. Convey this information to the Colorectal Cancer Coalition by emailing us at Advocacy@FightCRC.org so that we can track each state as we turn the whole country blue for Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

Sample Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Proclamation Request Cover Letter

Tailor this letter to suit your needs by replacing the information in yellow with specific information about you.

[Official's Name]

[Title]

[Address]

Dear [Title] [Last Name]:

On behalf of the Colorectal Cancer Coalition, we urge your support in proclaiming March 2011 as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in [city/state].

As you may know, colorectal cancer is one of only a few cancers that can be prevented through the use of screening tests, yet colorectal cancer remains the third most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second most common cause of cancer deaths for men and women in the United States. Each year, tens of thousands of lives are lost to this disease.

Despite these staggering statistics, colorectal cancer is one of the most preventable, treatable, and beatable forms of cancer, especially when it is caught early. Wider use of proven screening tests could save more than half of these lives.

During March, we ask you to help our [state/city/community] fight this disease by proclaiming March as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and encouraging your residents to help reduce the number of lives lost to colorectal cancer. They can do so by speaking with their doctor about getting screened; by spreading the word that the disease is preventable, treatable, and beatable; and by wearing and/or displaying the Blue Star, which represents the eternal memory of those whose lives have been lost to colorectal cancer and the shining hope for a future free of the disease.

While progress has been made, much is left to do. We hope that we can count on your support to let your constituents know that together we can win the fight against colorectal cancer.

We hope you will find the enclosed draft language helpful in crafting a proclamation declaring March 2011 as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in [STATE NAME].

Thank you for considering this lifesaving request. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

[Name]

[Contact info]

Sample Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Proclamation

Help speed the proclamation process along by providing some sample language. Be sure to replace the information highlighted in yellow with the needed information.

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS colorectal cancer is third most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second most common cause of cancer deaths for men and women in the United States;

WHEREAS colorectal cancer affects men and women equally;

WHEREAS the lifetime risk of being diagnosed with cancer of the colon or rectum is 5.5 percent for men and 5.1 percent for women in the United States;

WHEREAS every 3.7 minutes, someone is diagnosed with colorectal cancer and every 10 minutes someone dies from colorectal cancer;

WHEREAS the vast majority of colon cancer deaths can be prevented through proper screening and early detection;

WHEREAS every 5 seconds someone who should be screened for colorectal cancer is not;

WHEREAS the survival rate of individuals who have colorectal cancer is 91 percent when detected in the early stages versus only a 10 percent survival rate when colorectal cancer is diagnosed after it has spread to other organs;

WHEREAS of the 51,370 people expected to die of colorectal cancers in 2010, early detection could save more than half;

WHEREAS only 39 percent of colorectal cancer patients have their cancers detected at an early stage;

WHEREAS regular colorectal cancer screening has been ranked as one of the most cost effective screening interventions available, with the potential to save 40,000 lives a year;

WHEREAS if the majority of people in the United States age 50 or older were screened regularly for colorectal cancer, the death rate from this disease could plummet by up to 70 percent;

WHEREAS, among African-Americans, incidence rates are more than 20 percent higher and mortality rates are about 45 percent higher than rates in Whites;

WHEREAS, African-Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians, and Alaskan Natives are significantly less likely to be screened for colorectal cancer compared to Whites;

WHEREAS greater awareness of this cancer and the means to prevent it could save the lives of tens of thousands of people in the United States each year;

WHEREAS colorectal cancer is preventable, treatable, and beatable in most cases; and

WHEREAS observing a Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month during the month of March would provide a special opportunity to offer education on the importance of early detection and screening.

NOW THEREFORE, I, [NAME], GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF [STATE NAME], do hereby proclaim March 2011 as: COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused to be affixed the Great Seal of the State of [STATE NAME], in the City of [CITY NAME], this 1st day of March, 2010.

Sample Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Proclamation Press Release

Once you have gotten a Proclamation, use this template to let the media know about the proclamation AND about any events you have planned. They may be interested in following up with you for more detail or background, so be prepared.

Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[DATE]

Contact: [Your name]

[Your phone number]

[OFFICIAL'S NAME] Proclaims March 2011 as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in [CITY/STATE]

[YOUR CITY, STATE] — (Release Date)—In an effort to raise awareness about colorectal cancer, [OFFICIAL'S NAME] proclaimed March 2011 as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month – a national movement to increase awareness and education about colorectal cancer and to spread the message that colorectal cancer is preventable, treatable, and beatable. Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month will be observed throughout March and will include events and outreach activities nationwide.

Colorectal cancer is one of only a few cancers that can be prevented through the use of screening tests, yet colorectal cancer remains the third most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second most common cause of cancer deaths for men and women in the United States. Each year, tens of thousands of lives are lost to this disease.

Despite these staggering statistics, colorectal cancer is one of the most preventable, treatable, and beatable forms of cancer, especially when it is caught early. Unfortunately, nearly half of all Americans are not getting the recommended screenings they need. Many deaths expected from colorectal cancer this year could be avoided with wider use of proven screening tests.

[OFFICIAL'S NAME]'s support in proclaiming March as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in [STATE NAME] will help to increase awareness in our state during this important month.

In recognition of March's designation as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, the following events are being offered throughout the month:

- [Program title, location, date, time]
- [Program title, location, date, time]
- [Program title, location, date, time]

To learn more about these events, call [name] at [phone].

“The Colorectal Cancer Coalition is thrilled that [OFFICIAL'S NAME] proclaimed March 2011 as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in [CITY/STATE],” stated Carlea Bauman, President of the Coalition. “Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month is about educating men and women to save lives. The more we talk about this disease, and the more we encourage our family and friends to get screened – the more lives we can save.”

For additional resources visit the Colorectal Cancer Coalition's website at www.FightColorectalCancer.org.

The Colorectal Cancer Coalition is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization seeking to eliminate suffering and death due to colorectal cancer. The Coalition pushes for research to improve screening, diagnosis and treatment of colorectal cancer; advocates for policy decisions that make the most effective colorectal cancer prevention and treatment available to all; and works to increase awareness that colorectal cancer is preventable, treatable and beatable.

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Sample Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Letter to the Editor

Once you have gotten a Proclamation, use this template to increase awareness in your community about the proclamation and about Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

Title: NATIONAL COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Dear Editor,

America is making progress in the fight against colorectal cancer. However, it still remains the third most commonly diagnosed cancer and the second most common cause of cancer deaths for men and women in the United States.

The good news is that colorectal cancer is one of only a few cancers that can actually be prevented through the use of regular screening tests.

Screening saves lives.

Colorectal cancer screening allows doctors to find and remove growths (called “polyps”) before they become cancerous, thereby preventing cancer. These tests can also detect cancer at an earlier, more curable stage. Unfortunately, nearly half of all Americans are not getting the recommended screenings they need. Many deaths expected from colorectal cancer this year could be avoided with wider use of proven screening tests.

Governor [NAME]’s support in proclaiming March as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in [STATE NAME] will help to increase awareness in our state during this important month. I hope our community will become more aware of the need to get screened for colorectal cancer and will talk to their doctor about getting a screening test, especially for people 50 and older.

I urge our community to join me in proudly wearing the Blue Star symbol this March and year round. The Blue Star represents the eternal memory of people whose lives have been lost to colorectal cancer and the hope for a future free of the disease. Each time you see the Blue Star, remember and share the facts – colorectal cancer is preventable, treatable, and beatable.

For more information, visit the Colorectal Cancer Coalition’s website at www.FightColorectalCancer.org.

Sincerely,

[Your Name]

Tips for Leveraging Your Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month Proclamation

- 1.** Let the Governor's office know how you intend to use the proclamation. For example, let them know that recognition of March as Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month is a way to raise awareness about the need for early detection and screening. Give them examples of the types of outreach you plan to do in the community to highlight the proclamation, such as media coverage of the proclamation or a community outreach event. Be sure to let the Governor's office know of any events which occur as a result of the proclamation, this will improve your chances of getting their attention for another proclamation in following years.
- 2.** Ask the Governor's office if they will issue a press release to the media and also on their official website.
- 3.** Issue your own press release mentioning proclamation and/or signing ceremony where appropriate (a sample press release is available online at <http://link.fightcrc.org/proclamations101>).
- 4.** If you submit an op-ed piece or letter to the editor, mention that the Governor/city official declared March as Colorectal Awareness Month.
- 5.** Use the proclamation as an opportunity to reach out to your elected officials and remind them of the important role they play in helping to remove the barriers to affordable colorectal cancer screening.
- 6.** Give copies of the proclamation to non-profit health organizations, support groups, etc. so, they, in turn, can promote Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and their services.