



January 20, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump,

I urge you to make colorectal cancer screening and research a priority during your time in office. For over 10 years, Fight Colorectal Cancer has been the leading advocacy organization in the country for colorectal cancer survivors, caregivers and family members touched by this preventable cancer.

Colorectal cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer death in the U.S. among men and women combined. It's estimated that there will be 137,000 cases and 50,000 deaths this year. One in 20 people will be diagnosed. Colorectal cancer can be prevented with screening; if detected in early stages, most colorectal cancer patients are cured by surgery alone, or by surgery and chemotherapy. Cures are rare for patients with metastatic colorectal cancer; however, new research is very promising.

Fight Colorectal Cancer (Fight CRC) is one of the 1,000+ organizations that have taken the "80% by 2018" pledge spearheaded by the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (NCCRT). The campaign's goal is to see 80 percent of Americans age 50 years and older screened by the year 2018. Currently, there are over 22 million Americans who need to be screened.

We are asking for your support to remove barriers to colorectal cancer screenings, invest in research efforts and most importantly, protect the best interests of patients as your team repeals the Affordable Care Act. We appreciate this opportunity to make the following recommendations to your Administration.

Remove Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screenings

While the Affordable Care Act covers colorectal cancer screening, Medicare beneficiaries face a significant financial barrier. Although Medicare policy covers screening colonoscopies at 100%, if a polypectomy is performed to remove detected polyps, beneficiaries become responsible for paying co-insurance of roughly 20%. Although this was not the intention of the policy, it is a major deterrent to screening, costing the lives of seniors. Furthermore, if a Medicare beneficiary forgoes preventative screening and colorectal cancer is detected late-stage, the chance of survival is decreased and their treatment is a cost for taxpayers. It is in the best interest of the public and the government to correct this loophole. Fight CRC has made this issue a top priority for the past three Congresses and most recently had more than 350 combined co-sponsors in the 114th Congress (HR 1220/S 624).



Following USPSTF recommendations, it is also critical for your Administration to ensure the “replace” component of Repeal and Replace provides sufficient insurance coverage for those 50 and older, and/or those at a high risk of developing colorectal cancer, to receive a screening colonoscopy at no charge. When detected early, the survival rate for individuals diagnosed with colorectal cancer is 90 percent, whereas individuals diagnosed after the cancer has spread to other organs have a five-year survival rate of only 12.5 percent. Additionally, if all Americans age 50 and older followed the recommended screening guidelines for colorectal cancer, the death rate from this disease could decrease up to 70 percent.

To this end, we recommend your Administration invest in community health centers and Centers for Disease Control Colorectal Cancer Control Program (CRCCP) grant recipients to provide patient navigation and free or low cost colorectal cancer screenings to underserved populations. African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians and Alaska Natives are significantly less likely to be screened for colorectal cancer. Therefore we must invest time, effort and resources within those communities to raise awareness and increase screening rates.

Invest in Research

We urge you to follow the momentum of the recently signed 21st Century Cures law by ensuring funding for the Cancer Moonshot Initiative, the Precision Medicine Initiative and substantial increases to current National Institutes of Health funding levels. Investing in research results in novel therapies for patients and leads us closer to finding a cure.

Furthermore, the inclusion of patient feedback in discussions and decisions related to clinical trials and treatment options is essential. It is critical for researchers to understand the real-world effects on patients and gain an understanding of what patients find valuable as it relates to treatment and health care.

We support the Vision and Pathway for the NIH report’s recommendation to revise the grant application review process to better reward bold ideas, creative risks and innovative approaches¹ and encourage your Administration to consider it as well.

Protect the Best Interests of Patients

As President, you have the responsibility of protecting the lives of all Americans, therefore we urge you to ensure the best interests of cancer patients are a top priority. There is tangible fear within the cancer community surrounding the repeal of the Affordable Care Act; without sufficient, affordable coverage, cancer patients cannot receive the care they need and deserve.

¹ <http://www.nihvp.org/>



We urge you to ensure patients with pre-existing conditions, such as cancer, will not be denied insurance coverage or face discrimination through narrow provider networks or other price control measures.

Additionally, as the FDA streamlines its processes to improve efficiency, it is critical to maintain patient safety and drug effectiveness as a top priority.

Finally, Fight CRC recommends your Administration ensure patients receive individualized treatments that are most effective for each patient, following NCCN guidelines rather than treatment pathways or other value tools.

You are presented with a great opportunity as the new President of the United States and we, as a community of millions affected by colorectal cancer, are counting on you. Please consider these recommendations as you develop your policy agenda and as you make game changing decisions over the course of your term.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anjee Davis".

Anjee Q. Davis
President, Fight Colorectal Cancer

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy Roach".

Nancy Roach
Founder & Board Chair

About Fight Colorectal Cancer

Fight Colorectal Cancer (Fight CRC) is a community of activists who find it unacceptable that colorectal cancer – a preventable disease – is the second-leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S. In 2005, we were founded by survivors and family members who believed in making a difference. Since then we have grown to be a leading, national nonprofit known for our advocacy. Our team plays an important role in making medical information practical for survivors and their families and provides trusted resources that guide patients from diagnosis through survivorship. We unite the colorectal cancer community by empowering anyone impacted by this disease to share their story, advocate for better policies and get involved in the research process. We are one million strong and we won't stop fighting until there's a cure. Join us at FightCRC.org.