

Public Reporting of Outcomes 2019 Cancer Services Annual Report

Colorectal Health Community Education Event

Date of Event: April 4

The American Cancer Society (ACS) has estimated 145,600 new cases of colorectal cancer in the United States for 2019. The disease is expected to cause approximately 51,000 deaths. Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths in men and women and it is the third most common cancer. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommends screening for colorectal cancer begin at age 50 and continue until age 75. Regular screening is key to preventing colorectal cancer. When caught early, the disease is most treatable and outcomes are better. Following recommended guidelines has also been associated with a 60 percent reduction in the risk of death from colorectal cancer, according to the ACS.

Northwest Community Healthcare (NCH) held a colorectal health community education event on April 4, following March's Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. The evening reception was held from 6 to 8:30 p.m. at Cooper's Hawk Winery & Restaurant in Arlington Heights. The event was exclusive to individuals who were overdue for a colonoscopy. There were 130 people registered for the event and 106 attended, resulting in an attendance rate of 82 percent. The panel of presenters included a registered dietitian, colorectal cancer patient navigator, gastroenterologist, colorectal surgeon and radiation oncologist. Attendees were encouraged to submit their written questions, which were answered at the end of the presentation by the panel of experts. There were about 50 questions collected, which showed significant engagement by the audience. Three individuals signed up for a colonoscopy procedure at the event. Overall, NCH's colorectal cancer awareness campaign and various community outreach events held throughout March and April have directly led to 103 people scheduling colonoscopies.

The success of the April 4 event was measured by the number of attendees and how engaged they were during the Q & A part of the presentation. Stephen Nigh, M.D., the host of the event, was impressed with how engaged the audience was, evidenced by the 50 questions submitted. The majority of questions related to screening tests, the bowel preparation required for a colonoscopy, complications from the procedure and colon surgery, myths regarding colorectal cancer and diet changes that may help reduce risk for colorectal cancer. There were also various questions pertaining to individuals' personal health.

Considerations to help improve future events include recognizing the audience as being laymen and lacking the medical background to understand topics mentioned such as Lynch syndrome, local versus regional stages and types of colon surgery. Also, it would be helpful to include a medical oncologist on the expert panel as there were also questions geared toward immunotherapy and targeted therapy. The setting for the event could also be improved as the audience located at the back of the room had a somewhat difficult time hearing the presentation and Q & A.

NCH will consider a colorectal health education event again in the future. There is always an opportunity to increase awareness and educate on the importance of colorectal screening in the prevention of colorectal cancer. While colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths, it does not have to be if people follow recommended screening guidelines.