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ASGE AND ACTOR HILL HARPER RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT COLON CANCER SCREENING AMONG AFRICAN-AMERICANS IN NEW PSA

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

OAK BROOK, Ill. – March 2, 2010 – *CSI: New York* actor Hill Harper has joined forces with the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE), representing doctors who specialize in endoscopy and colon cancer screening, in a new Public Service Announcement (PSA) to encourage African-Americans to undergo screening for colon cancer. Colon cancer kills nearly 50,000 people each year, with a disproportionate frequency in the African-American community. Many of those deaths could be prevented with earlier detection. Colonoscopy screening for colon (or colorectal) cancer is particularly valuable because it allows the doctor to find polyps - growths in the colon or rectum that may become cancer - and remove them before the polyps have the opportunity to turn into cancer. The PSA, "Catch a Killer: Get Screened for Colon Cancer," is a part of ASGE's public outreach initiatives for National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month in March. The PSA can be found on ASGE's YouTube channel at <http://www.youtube.com/user/ASGEGIEndoscopy>.

"We are excited to be partnering with Hill Harper to spread the word in the African-American community about the importance of colon cancer screening. Guidelines suggest that people at average risk for developing colon cancer begin screening at age 50; however, some studies have shown that African-Americans are more frequently diagnosed with colon cancer at a younger age. Therefore, some experts suggest that African-Americans begin screening at age 45," said Jacques Van Dam, MD, PhD, FASGE, president, American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. "This is a preventable disease and African-Americans can help reduce their risk of colon cancer by learning about the disease, knowing their family's medical history, and by speaking with their doctor about risk factors to determine an appropriate screening schedule."

Every week in the top-ten rated TV series *CSI: New York*, Hill Harper's character, Dr. Sheldon Hawkes, catches killers using science. In this new PSA, the actor encourages viewers to help catch a killer: colon cancer. Harper learned from his parents, both doctors with a strong commitment to improving the health of their community, about the importance of public health. In addition to earning many accolades for his work on stage and screen, Harper holds both a JD and a master's degree in public administration from Harvard. He is also a *New York Times* best-selling author and a philanthropist who operates his own non-profit youth organization, *Manifest Your Destiny* (www.manifestyourdestiny.org).

"This disease does not need to take nearly 50,000 lives each year. Screening for colon cancer can stop cancer in its tracks," said Hill Harper. "I'm proud to be working with the ASGE, an organization with a

long history of educating the public about colon cancer. I encourage all African-Americans, aged 45 and over, to talk to their doctor about screening for colon cancer. It could save their life.”

The broadcast PSA directs viewers to ASGE’s colon cancer awareness Web site, www.screen4coloncancer.org. The site offers visitors a wealth of information including facts about colon cancer and screening options, what to expect during a colonoscopy, answers to frequently asked questions, links to patient support and advocacy groups, informational videos, and how to find a qualified gastrointestinal endoscopist. If you are on Facebook, use the search term “Peter and Polly Polyp” to find ASGE’s colon cancer awareness Facebook page or click here: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Peter-and-Polly-Polyp-ASGE-Colon-Cancer-Awareness/44302658313>.

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About the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy

Since its founding in 1941, the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) has been dedicated to advancing patient care and digestive health by promoting excellence in gastrointestinal endoscopy. ASGE, with more than 11,000 members worldwide, promotes the highest standards for endoscopic training and practice, fosters endoscopic research, recognizes distinguished contributions to endoscopy, and is the foremost resource for endoscopic education. Visit www.asge.org and www.screen4coloncancer.org for more information and to find a qualified doctor in your area.

About Endoscopy

Endoscopy is performed by specially-trained physicians called endoscopists using the most current technology to diagnose and treat diseases of the gastrointestinal tract. Using flexible, thin tubes called endoscopes, endoscopists are able to access the human digestive tract without incisions via natural orifices. Endoscopes are designed with high-intensity lighting and fitted with precision devices that allow viewing and treatment of the gastrointestinal system.