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**PRESIDENT DECLARES MARCH 2014 NATIONAL COLORECTAL
CANCER AWARENESS MONTH**

DOWNERS GROVE, Ill., MARCH 3, 2014 – The American College of Gastroenterology (ACG), American Gastroenterological Association (AGA) and American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) applaud President Barack Obama's Proclamation designating March 2014 as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month.

In the proclamation, the President noted, "The second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States, colorectal cancer claims more than 50,000 American lives each year. Because the odds of survival rise dramatically when this cancer is caught early, calling attention to it can save lives. During National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, we aim to improve public understanding of risk factors and screening recommendations, reach for better treatments, and set our sights on a cure."

ACG, AGA and ASGE thank Rep. Donald M. Payne, Jr., (D-NJ) for his efforts in securing this Presidential Proclamation. Rep. Payne has made it his mission to raise awareness about colorectal cancer after his father, Congressman Donald M. Payne, Sr., lost his fight with colorectal cancer in 2012.

Each year more than 136,000 people are diagnosed with colorectal cancer in the United States. The disease, however, is largely preventable with regular screening and is treatable with early detection. Of the more than 50,000 people who died of colorectal cancer in 2013, screening could have saved more than half of them.

Both men and women should undergo testing for the disease beginning at age 50. People with a high risk for colorectal cancer and those with a family history should talk with their doctor about being screened at an earlier age.

There are many tests to screen for colorectal cancer. While other screening tests can detect colorectal cancer, colonoscopy is the only screening test that examines the entire colon and can actually prevent colorectal cancer because precancerous polyps are removed during the procedure. A 2012 study in the *New England Journal of Medicine* showed a 53 percent decline in deaths for patients who underwent colonoscopy and had precancerous polyps removed.

Unfortunately, screening rates are too low. A 2013 report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that 23 Million U.S. adults have not had the recommended screenings. The National Colorectal Roundtable has a goal for 80 percent of adults 50 and over to get screened by 2018.

The President's Proclamation highlights a profound opportunity to save lives from this largely preventable disease.

Learn more about colorectal cancer screening at valueofcolonoscopy.org.

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About The Value of Colonoscopy

The Value of Colonoscopy: Saving Lives Through Expert Care is a partnership of the American College of Gastroenterology, American Gastroenterological Association and American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. The three gastroenterology societies have come together to highlight the value of colonoscopy in detecting and preventing colorectal cancer and the gastroenterologists who perform this life-saving procedure. The goal of the initiative is to ensure access to life-saving colorectal cancer screening procedures while working together to improve the quality and affordability of health care for all Americans.

About the American College of Gastroenterology

Founded in 1932, the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) is an organization with an international membership of more than 12,000 individuals from 80 countries. The College's vision is to be the pre-eminent professional organization that champions the evolving needs of clinicians in the delivery of high quality, evidence-based, and compassionate health care to gastroenterology patients. The mission of the College is to advance world-class care for patients with gastrointestinal disorders through excellence, innovation and advocacy in the areas of scientific investigation, education, prevention and treatment. www.gi.org

About the AGA Institute

The American Gastroenterological Association is the trusted voice of the GI community. Founded in 1897, the AGA has grown to include 17,000 members from around the globe who are involved in all aspects of the science, practice and advancement of gastroenterology. The AGA Institute administers the practice, research and educational programs of the organization. www.gastro.org/

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 and innovation in gastrointestinal endoscopy. ASGE, with more than 12,000 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.