



AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR GASTROINTESTINAL ENDOSCOPY

**Colorectal cancer, although preventable, is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States.
Removing barriers to screening saves lives and health care costs.**

REMOVE BARRIERS TO COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING

ISSUE OVERVIEW:

Colonoscopy is a unique preventive service that allows for the detection of colorectal cancer and the removal of precancerous polyps *during* the screening procedure, thereby preventing cancer.

Under Medicare, screening colonoscopy is a covered preventive service without beneficiary cost sharing. However, current law holds Medicare beneficiaries responsible for paying coinsurance when a colorectal cancer screening colonoscopy also involves the removal of polyps or other tissue during the screening encounter. This oversight in current law creates a financial barrier to colorectal cancer screening for Medicare beneficiaries.

Current policy is unfair and confusing to Medicare patients. Cost to Medicare beneficiaries of polyp removal during a screening is considerable (~ \$100-\$300) and can serve as a screening deterrent. The Centers of Disease Control and Prevention reports that 2 in 5 adults are not up-to-date with screening. Current law disproportionately affects lower income beneficiaries because they are most likely to lack supplemental insurance coverage to defray the expense of these unexpected out-of-pocket costs. This population also has the lowest colorectal cancer screening rates.

Recognizing that polyp removal is integral to colorectal cancer screening colonoscopy, the Department of Health and Human Services clarified on Feb. 20, 2013 that under the Affordable Care Act, a private health plan or issuer cannot impose cost sharing when a polyp is removed during a colonoscopy that is performed as a screening. Medicare beneficiaries should not be disproportionately disadvantaged by preventive colorectal cancer screening cost-sharing obligations.

LEGISLATIVE ASK:

Cosponsor and support passage of legislation that would waive beneficiary cost-sharing when a screening colonoscopy requires the removal of a potentially precancerous polyp.

HOUSE: Cosponsor the “Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act” (H.R. 1017) introduced by Reps. Charlie Dent (R-PA) and Donald Payne, Jr. (D-NJ).

SENATE: Cosponsor the “Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act” (S. 479) introduced by Sens. Sherrod Brown (D-OH) and Roger Wicker (R-MS).