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MEDIA RELEASE

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COLONOSCOPIES CONTRIBUTE TO DECLINE IN CANCER MORTALITY RATES

ASCs vital provider of life-saving screenings

ALEXANDRIA, VA, February 23, 2012— The Ambulatory Surgery Center Association (ASCA) today lauded the findings of an independent study released by the highly respected New England Journal of Medicine which provides new evidence that colonoscopies save lives—perhaps reducing colorectal cancer mortality by as much as 53%. The study underscores the importance of these screenings and the need to ensure that Americans have affordable access.

“This study reinforces what those in the health care field have long maintained: screenings save lives,” says ASCA Board President David Shapiro, MD. “Ambulatory surgery centers (ASCs) play a vital role in providing access to this life-saving procedure, and we hope that this high-level confirmation of the efficacy of colonoscopies will encourage even more Americans to heed their doctor’s advice and choose to be screened.”

According to the American Cancer Society, deaths from colorectal cancer have been declining for more than two decades, mostly because of screenings, including colonoscopies and other tests. People of average risk of colon cancer ages 50 to 75 should get screened, but only about half in the United States do so.

“When you couple the findings from this new study with information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) that indicates a 10-year trend toward decreasing colorectal cancer mortality rates in the United States at the same time that an increasing number of diagnostic and screening colonoscopies were being performed, it is important to have a renewed focus on ensuring the access to and the affordability of this important procedure,” continued Shapiro. “ASCs play a vital role in insuring patients’ access to these procedures by providing both convenience and affordability.”

ASCs are modern health care facilities focused on providing same-day surgical care, including diagnostic and preventive health care procedures. As essential Medicare providers of surgical and cancer screening services, ASCs perform more than 40 percent of Medicare colonoscopies.

More information about the study can be found here:

http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoal100370?query=featured_home