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Manet Community Health Center Joins Forces with 500 Local and National Organizations to Increase US Colorectal Cancer Screenings Rates

Quincy, MA (June 24, 2016) – Colorectal cancer screening has been proven to save lives.

Manet Community Health Center today announced that it has made the pledge to help increase colorectal cancer screening rates by supporting the **80% by 2018** initiative, led by the American Cancer Society (ACS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable (an organization co-founded by ACS and CDC). 80% by 2018 is a shared goal to have 80 percent of adults aged 50 and older regularly screened for colorectal cancer by 2018.

In March 2016, the health center concluded a two-year project funded by the American Cancer Society designed to increase colorectal cancer screening rates among Manet patients. The project successfully surpassed goals and increased colorectal cancer screening by 20 percent over the two-year project period, a crucial step toward reducing the impact of colorectal cancer in the community.

Signing the 80% by 2018 pledge will continue this momentum for Manet's patients and the many South Shore communities served by the health center. "The ACS grant enabled us to screen 1,605 patients during the two-year project period," explains Ayotomide Oyelakin, MBBS, MPH, CPHQ, Senior Director, Performance Improvement. "Currently, Manet has 5,700 patients over the age of 50 and only about half of them have been screened for colorectal cancer. By making the pledge, we are committing to engage the remaining population to ensure they get screened."

Colorectal cancer is the nation's second-leading cause of cancer-related deaths; however, it is one of only a few cancers that can be prevented. Through proper colorectal cancer screening, doctors can find and remove hidden growths (called "polyps") in the colon, before they become cancerous. Removing polyps can prevent cancer altogether.

"Colorectal cancer is a major public health problem, and adults age 50 and older should be regularly screened for it, but we have found that many people aren't getting tested because they don't believe they are at risk, don't understand the testing options or don't think they can afford it," said Lily Yung, MD, Manet's Chief Medical Officer. "The truth is that the vast majority of cases of colorectal cancer occur in people age 50 and older. Colorectal cancer in its early stages usually has no symptoms, so everyone 50 and older should be tested. There are several screening options – even take home options – available. Plus, many public and private insurance plans cover colorectal cancer screening and there may be local resources available to help those who are uninsured."

While colorectal cancer incidence rates have dropped 30 percent in the U.S. over the last 10 years among adults 50 and older, it is still the second leading cause of cancer death in the U.S. despite being highly

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preventable, detectable and treatable. In fact, in 2015 132,700 cases of colorectal cancer were diagnosed in the U.S.

Part of the 80% by 2018 goal is to leverage the energy of multiple and diverse partners to empower communities, patients, providers to increase screening rates. The 80% by 2018 initiative consists of health care providers, health systems, communities, businesses, community health centers, government, non-profit organizations and patient advocacy groups who are committed to getting more people screened for colorectal cancer to prevent more cancers and save lives.

“We are thrilled to join the cause to improve colorectal cancer screening rates,” said Cynthia Sierra, Manet’s Chief Executive Officer. “We are asking all members of our community to come together and help us by getting screened and talking to your friends and family who are over 50 years of age about getting screened. Together, we can help to eliminate colorectal cancer as a major public health problem.”

For more information or to make an appointment with a Manet provider, call 617-376-3000 or visit www.manetchc.org. To find additional information and resources call 1-800-227-2345 or visit www.cancer.org.

About Manet Community Health Center:

Founded in 1979, Manet Community Health Center, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC) dedicated to providing preventive, primary and non-emergent urgent care to all, regardless of financial circumstance or health insurance coverage status. With three locations in Quincy, one in Hull and one in Taunton, Manet serves patients from numerous surrounding communities. Manet is accredited by The Joint Commission and its practice sites are recognized as Level 3 Patient Centered Medical Homes by the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NQCA). Manet provides services that are reflective of the languages and cultures of the communities it serves and offers a full array of services and programs for infants, children, adolescents, adults, and seniors. For more information, visit www.manetchc.org.

About the American Cancer Society

The American Cancer Society is a global grassroots force of more than three million volunteers saving lives and fighting for every birthday threatened by every cancer in every community. As the largest voluntary health organization, the Society's efforts have contributed to a 20 percent decline in cancer death rates in the U.S. since 1991, and a 50 percent drop in smoking rates. Thanks in part to our progress nearly 14 million Americans who have had cancer and countless more who have avoided it will celebrate more birthdays this year. We're determined to finish the fight against cancer. We're finding cures as the nation's largest private, not-for-profit investor in cancer research, ensuring people facing cancer have the help they need and continuing the fight for access to quality health care, lifesaving screenings, clean air, and more. For more information, to get help, or to join the fight, call us anytime, day or night, at 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org.

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