

## ***UOAA Supports the Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act!***

### ***Background***

Colorectal cancer often has no warning signs or symptoms. According to the American Cancer Society, this year approximately 145,600 Americans will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer and over 51,000 will die from the disease. Colorectal cancer remains the second leading cause of cancer death in men and woman combined in the United States<sup>1</sup>. The majority of those diagnosed will be Medicare beneficiaries. This cancer is largely preventable with regular screening and treatable if caught early. When polyps are detected during the screening procedure, they can immediately be removed and stop cancer formation.

Under current Medicare regulations it covers life-saving screening colonoscopies at no cost to the patient. However, if polyps are removed during the screening procedure, beneficiaries are required to pay a 20% co-insurance for the procedure. Private insurance does not have this cost-sharing. Many beneficiaries are unaware of this loophole and can wake up from the procedure with a surprise bill! This is an unfair financial burden placed on Medicare beneficiaries. More importantly, out-of-pocket expenses may discourage patients from having screenings done.

Congress has re-introduced a bill Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act (S668/H.R.1570). This act would waive Medicare coinsurance requirements with respect to colorectal cancer screening tests, regardless of the code billed for a resulting diagnosis or procedure.

### ***Why Congress Needs to Pass this Act in the 116<sup>th</sup> Congress:***

- An estimated \$14 billion is spent annually on colorectal cancer treatments in the United States, with projection increasing to \$20 billion by 2020, with Medicare bearing as much as half of the cost<sup>2</sup>
- Treatment costs for the Medicare program can be reduced by preventing colorectal cancer through polyp removal
- More lives can be saved by identifying cancer earlier

### ***United Ostomy Associations of America (UOAA) Position:***

UOAA supports the *Removing Barriers to Colorectal Cancer Screening Act*. Life-saving ostomy surgery may be needed by those who suffer from colorectal cancer and other intestinal or urinary or gastroenterology medical conditions. This legislation would eliminate the unexpected costs for senior citizens, and could increase the number of Medicare beneficiaries getting preventative screenings and reduce the number of deaths from this devastating disease.

<sup>1</sup> American Cancer Society. Cancer Prevention & Early Detection Facts & Figures 2017-2018. Atlanta: American Cancer Society; 2017.

<sup>2</sup> Mariotto AB, Yabroff KR, Shao Y, Feuer EJ, Brown ML. Projections of the cost of cancer care in the United States: 2010-2020. *J Natl Cancer Inst*. 2011; 103(2):117-28.