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WE NEED SUPPORT FOR THE SCREEN ACT (S. 1151)

Senators Ben Cardin (D-MD) and Lindsey Graham (R-SC) recently introduced the “Supporting ColoRectal Examination and Education Now” or SCREEN Act (S. 1151). Please urge your elected officials to cosponsor this bill.

S.1151 promotes access to colorectal cancer screenings by waiving Medicare beneficiary cost sharing, increasing reimbursement rates for screening services, and by providing Medicare coverage for a pre-screening consultation. The SCREEN Act also authorizes the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to set a nationwide colorectal cancer screening target rate, to implement colorectal cancer screening grant programs, and to provide annual reminders to Medicare beneficiaries regarding the importance of colorectal cancer screening.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) provides its only Grade ‘A’ recommendation of cancer screening to colorectal cancer screens. Yet colorectal cancer screenings remain underutilized as only 40% of colorectal cancers are diagnosed at an early stage according to the latest figures released by the American Cancer Society. The Institute of Medicine cites poor provider reimbursement as one of the reasons for this underutilization as well. What’s more, the New England Journal of Medicine says that a colonoscopy colorectal cancer screening is one of the few preventive services shown to reduce future health care costs. At a time when Congress and the President are seeking to improve access to high quality health care and preventive services, increasing the rate of colorectal cancer screening through proven measures helps accomplish these goals.

Please request your Senators to cosponsor S. 1151.