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Press Release

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For immediate release

CT Colonography recommended as screening option to lower cancer mortality

Radiologists of Washington State are applauding this week's announcement by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) that adults age 50-75 can be routinely screened utilizing using CT colonography as an alternative to previously recommended methods such as routine colonoscopy.

Washington State Radiological Society (WSRS) President Dr. Eric Stern stated "our member radiologists enthusiastically welcome this announcement which recognizes that many Americans do not get screened for colon cancer and that CT colography may be a way to get more adults to seek screening." Dr. Stern predicts that this change in recommendation could ultimately save many lives.

The USPSTF recommendations, published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* this week, concluded that "screening for colorectal cancer in average-risk, asymptomatic adults aged 50-75 years is of substantial net benefit."

The newly released conclusion, based on USPSTF's extensive evidence review, updates the previous recommendations of national health advocacy groups such as the American Cancer Society which had in recent years advocated for screening by colonoscopy and other types of tests on a particular schedule. CT colonography has now been included as one of seven acceptable options for colorectal cancer screening in the task force's final recommendation. The findings recognize that CT colonography, a radiology-based test which is less invasive than a

traditional colonoscopy, is another excellent option for screening. CT Colonography, sometimes referred to as 'virtual colonoscopy', is an American Cancer Society-recommended screening exam that has been shown in studies in the United States and abroad to increase screening rates where offered. Virtual colonoscopy has been proven comparably accurate to colonoscopy in most people of screening age.

The USPSTF study recognized that a large percentage of the population ages 50-75 are currently not getting any type of screening. In a recent statement, the American College of Radiology estimated that "a third of those who should be screened for colorectal cancer still choose not to be tested. Patients need more fully covered screening options if we are going to reduce colorectal cancer deaths."

According to William T. Thorwarth, MD, FACR, chief executive officer of the American College of Radiology, now that the technology of CT colonography has been recognized as effective by the USPSTF, "Private insurers and Medicare should fully cover virtual colorectal colonoscopy [CT colonography] and the other USPSTF-recognized exams."

The full study is found at <http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=2529486>

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