



## NEWS RELEASE

### ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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**"Think you aren't at risk for colon cancer? Think again"**

#### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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According to the American Cancer Society, approximately 147,000 people in the U.S. will be diagnosed with colon cancer this year and more than a third of them will die from the disease. Overall, colon cancers are the third most common cancer in both men and women and the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States.

Despite its high incidence rate, colorectal cancer is the most detectable, and if found early, the most treatable form of cancer. More than 90 percent of those diagnosed while the cancer is still localized survive more than five years. Men and women over the age of 50 should be screened on a routine basis.

Colon cancer (also referred to as colorectal cancer) develops in the digestive tract. The digestive tract processes food and rids the body of solid waste matter. This cancer usually develops from precancerous changes or polyps in the lining of these organs. These growths of tissue protruding into the colon or rectum are called polyps.

The Alabama Department of Public Health is promoting colon cancer education by launching a billboard awareness campaign across the state this spring. The billboards will read "Think You Aren't At Risk for Colon Cancer? Think Again. Ask Your Doctor. Get Checked." The billboards are funded by a grant from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention through the Alabama Department of Public Health.

Also appearing on the billboard is the National Cancer Institute's 1-800-4-Cancer phone number. This number provides callers with the latest cancer information from prevention, treatment and clinical trial information.

"Most people are reluctant to talk about colon cancer and they are even more unwilling to get screened for colon cancer. We hope the billboards will encourage Alabamians to learn more about the disease and how to take steps to prevent it," says Brooke Thorington, public education coordinator for Cancer Prevention at the Alabama Department of Public Health. They may learn more about the disease by calling 1-800-4-Cancer or asking their healthcare provider.

"The most common symptom of early colon cancer is no symptom at all, that's why routine screening tests are so important," says Thorington.

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NOTE TO NEWS MEDIA:

The billboards can be seen at the following locations.

Auburn/Opelika I-85 North at exit 32

Birmingham I-65 South – South of 32nd Street

Dothan Ross Circle North of Wesley Way

Florence/Muscle Shoals US 72 East – West of Huntsville Road

Mobile I-65 South – South of Hwy 21  
I-10 West and I-65

Montgomery I-85 South at 1550 West St.

Tuscaloosa I-59 North University Blvd. at exit 79