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Join Atrium Health Navicent in recognizing March as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

Colorectal cancer affects 1 in 20 Americans

MACON, Ga., March 17, 2021 – The community is invited to join Navicent Health in recognizing March as National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. Colorectal cancer, also known as colon cancer, is the second most common cause of cancer death in the United States and affects 1 in 20 Americans. Incidence rates are particularly high among African-Americans, and the disease is very prevalent in the Southeast.

“This year, approximately 140,000 people will be diagnosed with colorectal cancer and 56,000 people will die from this disease,” said Dr. Douglas Brewer, Chief Medical Officer for Navicent Health Baldwin and a board-certified colorectal surgeon. “It is a highly preventable and treatable disease if caught early and an estimated 40,000 or more lives could be saved through screening and early treatment.”

Screening tests can find precancerous polyps that can be removed before they turn into cancer. For individuals of average risk, regular screenings are recommended to begin at age 45.

“The great paradox of screening exams like colonoscopy is that they have to be done before any symptoms develop, when patients often feel like the test is not necessary,” said Dr. Eli Penn, a gastroenterologist and an Associate Professor of Medicine at Mercer University. “There are no early warning signs. The precancerous colon polyps that are the targets of colonoscopy don’t often cause symptoms and are easily removed during the screening procedure. It’s cancer that causes bleeding and abdominal pain, and by that time, it is often invasive or metastatic.”

Routine screenings are available through a person’s primary care provider. For more information, please visit www.navicenthealth.org.

About Atrium Health Navicent

Atrium Health Navicent, the leading provider of health care in central and south Georgia, is committed to its mission of elevating health and wellbeing through compassionate care. Providing more than 1,000 beds and offering care in 53 specialties at more than 50 facilities throughout the region, Atrium Health Navicent provides care for health care consumers’ through an academic medical center; community, pediatric and rehabilitation hospitals; urgent care centers; physician practices; diagnostic centers; home health; hospice and palliative care; and a life plan community. Atrium Health Navicent is dedicated to enhancing health and wellness for individuals throughout the region through nationally recognized quality care, community health initiatives and collaborative partnerships. For more information, please visit www.NavicentHealth.org.

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