

TITLE: Backlog reduction of Veterans overdue for colorectal cancer screening at the VA Primary Care Clinic

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STUDENT SUBMISSION: Yes

TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE: Nurses

ABSTRACT: Colorectal cancer (CRC) is the third leading cause of cancer death in the U.S. (U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, 2021). At one Veterans Affairs (VA) primary care clinic, CRC screening rates for Veterans, between ages 45 to 75, were around 30-50%. The goal of this project was to reduce the backlog (clinical reminders) and to bring screening rates closer to the national benchmark of 80% (National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable, n.d.). Two hundred eleven patient chart reviews were completed dividing Veterans into high (33%) and average (67%) risk groups for CRC screening. In the high-risk group, 33% needed primary care provider follow-up, 6% required Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT), 23% needed a colonoscopy scheduled, and 38% had their reminder resolved. The factors for resolving reminders were Veterans being out of age range, receiving care outside of the VA, having an acute medical issue preventing CRC screening, an inability to contact Veteran, or a FIT kit had recently been sent. The backlog was due to inadequate staffing and the limitations of the Computerized Patient Record System (CPRS). The developed tracking system was effective in addressing reminders according to the stakeholders. Better staffing and upgrading the patient charting system would increase CRC screening rates and decrease backlogs.

OBJECTIVE(S): Describe the importance of colorectal cancer (CRC) screening Explain difference between average and high risk Veterans for colorectal cancer Identify strategies to reduce CRC screening backlog
