



Success Stories

Before It's Too Late

Cancer in low-income and minority populations is often diagnosed at a later, less treatable stage. About 50% of colon cancer cases in South Dakota are diagnosed at the regional or distal stage, when treatment is less successful. This rate is similar to the US average.

The SD CCCP Colorectal Workgroup designed a pilot project using volunteer and in-kind donations to provide 1,000 colon cancer screenings to men and women ages 50+ who are underinsured or uninsured and who also received healthcare services at Community Health Centers of the Dakotas (CHAD) or SD Urban Indian Health (SDUIH) clinics. Each participant was given an iFOBT kit to take home with instructions for returning in person or by mail. Clinicians provided education, and follow-up calls were made after two weeks to those participants who did not respond. For positive test results, follow-up colonoscopies were also provided free of charge.

This is Mark's story. Mark is 64 years old, unemployed and uninsured. He was a participant in the pilot project.

"This all started when I had so much pain in my foot that I couldn't walk. I knew I had to go to the doctor and my son finally convinced me to go. I went to the local clinic here in town and they didn't find any infection in my foot. The doc suggested that I have a follow-up appointment at a clinic for those like me who can't get insurance."

Mark scheduled a follow-up at a CHAD clinic, where the provider not only examined his foot, but also reviewed routine health screenings. Mark's father and brother had both been diagnosed with colon cancer. Mark agreed to a screening test called an iFOBT test. The nurse provided education on how to take the test, which he did at home, and how to return the cards to the clinic.