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HEALTH
DEPARTMENT
of Northwest Michigan

www.nwhealth.org

Prevent cancer by getting screened during Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month

CHARLEVOIX – Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in the United States, with about 140,000 new diagnoses per year. However, through screening, this disease is highly preventable. During March’s Colorectal Cancer Awareness campaign, the Health Department of Northwest Michigan is offering free colorectal cancer screenings for eligible patients throughout Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego counties.

Screening tests help prevent colorectal cancer by identifying abnormal growths for removal, or by catching cancer early enough to be successfully treated. [The Centers for Disease Control](#) advise regular screening for people ages 50-75, as risk increases with age. More than 90% of colorectal cancers occur in patients older than 50 years. Routine screening is essential because colorectal cancer can exist without symptoms. When symptoms do appear, they may include blood in the stool, stomach pain or cramps, and weight loss.

There are multiple types of screenings available, including simple at-home tests like the Fecal Occult Blood Test (FOBT). People are encouraged to speak with their doctor or medical provider about their best option. Most health insurance plans cover the cost of colorectal screening. For those without insurance or who have high deductibles, the Health Department may be able to help. Individuals who are 50-64 years old and meet income requirements may receive free preventative service. Feel free to drop in during the following times at these Health Department locations:

Mancelona 9am-noon March 4, 2-4pm March 25 • **Bellaire** 1-4pm March 4 • **Gaylord** 9am-noon March 2, 1-4pm March 16 & 27 • **Harbor Springs** 1-4pm March 5 & 12, 9am-noon March 23 • **Charlevoix** 9am-noon March 3 & 25, 1-4pm March 11 & 24

Call the Health Department at **(800) 432-4121** to make an appointment or to learn more about eligibility. The Health Department of Northwest Michigan is mandated by the Michigan Public Health Code to promote wellness, prevent disease, provide quality healthcare, address health problems of vulnerable populations, and protect the environment for the residents and visitors of Antrim, Charlevoix, Emmet, and Otsego Counties.