

Colon Cancer Alliance and American College of Radiology demand Medicare cover virtual colonoscopy

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In response to a study published online Feb. 23 in *Radiology* which showed that virtual colonoscopies are [comparably affective to standard colonoscopy](#) at detecting colorectal cancer and precancerous polyps in adults ages 65 and older, the Colon Cancer Alliance and the American College of Radiology released a joint statement demanding Medicare cover seniors for screening virtual colonoscopies — also known as CT colonography.

"The minimal invasiveness and lower cost of CT colonography can attract more seniors to be screened if Medicare will cover them for the exam. Many seniors, who might not get tested otherwise, can't afford the added cost of paying for the exam themselves and may ultimately pay with their lives if Medicare does not provide coverage," said Andrew Spiegel, Colon Cancer Alliance Chief Executive officer.

The joint CCA/ACR statement noted that this latest study echoes results of a major study of patients ages 50 and older published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* in 2008 and others since that demonstrated that CT colonography can serve as a frontline colorectal cancer screening tool.

"CT colonography is endorsed by the American Cancer Society as a recommended screening test. The Blue Cross Blue Shield Association Technology Evaluation Center (TEC) named virtual [colonoscopy](#) an

effective screening tool. CIGNA, UnitedHealthcare, Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield and other insurers cover screening virtual colonoscopy. Yet, Medicare refuses to cover seniors for this life-saving exam. All the while, thousands die needlessly each year from a disease that is nearly always treatable when caught early. This must change," said Judy Yee, MD, chair of the American College of [Radiology Colon Cancer Committee](#).

Provided by American College of Radiology

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