

**News: For Immediate Release**  
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**ASGE, MEDCHI, & MENOCAI PRACTICE TEAM UP TO INCREASE CRC  
SCREENING IN MARYLAND**

Annapolis, March 17, 2025 — MedChi Network Services, a division of the Maryland State Medical Society (MedChi), is collaborating with the Menocal Family Practice in Frederick to screen uninsured patients for colorectal cancer (CRC) as part of an effort that was developed by the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) to increase CRC screening and follow-up colonoscopy rates for underserved populations.

The Menocal practice has begun to identify and assist hundreds of patients get screened for CRC using a stool-based DNA test. Professional navigators from MedChi Network Services will guide patients who have an abnormal stool-based CRC test result through the continuum of care, including getting a timely follow-up colonoscopy or other applicable care. The ASGE project will cover the costs associated with the stool-based tests and any follow-up colonoscopies that are required. College Park-based Alpha Banks, MD, is one of the gastroenterologists who are expected to perform the follow-up colonoscopies.

“We are working with MedChi, ASGE, and Exact Sciences to provide some of society’s most vulnerable patients with equitable, potentially lifesaving access to colon cancer screening,” says Howard Haft, MD, MMM, CPE, FACPE, a physician and the project champion at the Menocal practice. “This is a wonderful example of doing well by doing good, and it’s an effort that has the potential to effect significant change.”

Dr. Haft adds that, “If it wasn’t for this program, some people would be discovering their colon cancers in a late stage – with treatments that would be more costly and less successful than by early detection.”

Jennifer Christie, MD, MASGE, the chair of ASGE’s CRC Screening Project Advisory Council, proclaims, “We are beyond proud and excited to be working with MedChi Network Services, the Menocal Family Practice, and Dr. Alpha Banks on this important and innovative project – one that will serve as the basis for a playbook that ASGE will develop to help increase CRC screening across Maryland and the rest of the US.”

Dr. Christie also thanks and applauds Gov. Wes Moore for proclaiming March as Colorectal Cancer Month in Maryland.

“Governor Moore’s [proclamation](#) put a much-needed spotlight on the crucial need for people who are 45 or older to get screened for colorectal cancer,” says Dr. Christie, while emphasizing that, “CRC is the leading cause of cancer death in men under 50 and the

second leading cause of cancer death in women who are under 50. The good news is that colorectal cancer has a 90 percent survival rate when it is detected early enough.”

Finally, ASGE and MedChi are encouraging lawmakers in Maryland to support cancer prevention funding in the state’s Cigarette Restitution Fund in FY 2026.

“These resources are used to support grants to local health departments and health systems to reduce the morbidity and mortality rates for seven targeted cancers identified in the program,” explains MedChi Executive Director and CEO, Gene Ranson. “The funds are essential for the Maryland Department of Health and local health departments to screen underserved patients for cancer.”

The ASGE project is being funded with an unrestricted grant from Exact Sciences and additional support from Ironwood Pharmaceuticals and Sebela Pharmaceuticals’ Braintree Laboratories affiliate.

Uninsured patients who live in the Frederick area who are 45 or older who are interested in participating in the ASGE project should call the Menocal practice at (240) 215-1138.

Visit [ASGE.org/CRC](https://www.asge.org/CRC) for information on ASGE’s CRC Screening Project.

*Photo cutline: From the left are MedChi General Counsel Ashton DeLong, MedChi Media Manager Diana Palewicz, ASGE CRC Screening Project Advisory Council Jennifer Christie, MD, MASGE, MedChi Outreach Director Colleen George, MedChi CEO Gene Ranson, Gary Pushkin, MD, and Howard Haft, MD, MMM, CPE, FACPE, with the Menocal Family Practice at the Maryland State Capitol in Annapolis on March 14.*

#### About MedChi

MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, is a non-profit membership association of Maryland physicians. It is the largest physician organization in Maryland. The mission of MedChi is to serve as Maryland's foremost advocate and resource for physicians, their patients and the public health of Maryland. For more information, please visit [www.medchi.org](http://www.medchi.org).

#### About Menocal Family Practice

The Menocal Family Practice takes most commercial insurance plans, including Medicare and Medicaid. It offers same-day visits for urgent needs, school physical exams, preventive health care visits, geriatric patient healthcare needs and chronic disease management. In addition to Frederick, Menocal has offices in Hagerstown, Pine Heights and Salisbury. Call 240.215.1138 to schedule an appointment or visit [myprivia.com/menocalfamilypractice](https://myprivia.com/menocalfamilypractice) for additional information.

#### About the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy

Since its founding in 1941, the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) has been dedicated to advancing patient care and digestive health by promoting excellence and innovation in gastrointestinal endoscopy. With more than 16,000 members worldwide, ASGE promotes the highest standards for endoscopic training and practice, fosters endoscopic research, recognizes distinguished contributions to endoscopy, and is the foremost resource for endoscopic education. Visit [ASGE.org](https://www.asge.org) for more information.