

# Tackling colorectal cancer disparities: Creating and funding the Louisiana FIT Colon program

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# Objectives:

- Identify steps to engage legislative support for a chronic disease initiative
- Understand the role of an advocacy group
- Recognize the important information to convey to garner legislative support for a chronic disease initiative



# Background:

- Colorectal Cancer (CRC) is preventable
- CRC in Louisiana (2005)
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> highest incidence rate (54.6)
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> highest mortality rate (20.4)
- Existing insurance mandate for diagnostic colonoscopies
  - According to the U.S. Census Bureau, LA had over 921,000 uninsured people in 2006



# 2007 Legislative Session:

- 1 week before session
  - American Cancer Society began identifying potential legislative champions
  - LA Legislators allowed to pre-file up to 5 bills
- Bill filed, but not for a CRC program...
  - Mandated coverage for double-contrast barium enemas
  - Resolution passed for the creation of a Colorectal Cancer Task Force



# Lessons Learned:

- Start early
- Identify the appropriate champion(s)
- Identify key partners
- Have a plan
- Have a budget (or budgets)
- Identify deal-breakers
- Train advocates
- Communicate!!



# 2008 Legislative Session:

- Summer 2007
  - American Cancer Society and the Louisiana Comprehensive Cancer Control Program convened potential partners, creating the Colorectal Cancer Task Force
  - CRC Task Force created a “Direct Action Organizing” plan with 2 branches, program planning and advocacy



# 2008 Legislative Session: Partners

- Planning Committee
  - American Cancer Society
  - Louisiana Comprehensive Cancer Control Program
  - Louisiana Primary Care Association
  - Louisiana Breast and Cervical Health Program



# 2008 Legislative Session: Partners

- Advocacy Committee
  - American Cancer Society
  - LSU Health Sciences Center
  - ACS CAN Volunteers
  - Louisiana Primary Care Association
  - Former and current Louisiana legislators





## 2008 Legislative Session: Developing the Plan

- Assessing capacity for screening, diagnostics and treatment
  - Hospitals and Federally Qualified Health Centers
- Developing a budget
  - Best case scenario, worst case scenario, and somewhere in the middle
- Developing a 3-Year Plan



# The 3-Year Plan

- Modeled after LBCHP
- How to screen:
  - Small amount of \$, biggest bang for buck
    - Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT)
    - Population-based screening
    - Screen only Average-Risk individuals through program
  - Over 70,000 eligible people



# The 3-Year Plan

- Capacity Issues:
  - Not enough trained providers for uninsured/underinsured
  - Not enough equipment, suite space
  - Need to develop referral mechanisms between federally funded clinics (screening) and state hospitals (diagnostics)
  - Patient compliance issues called for patient navigation
  - Training of clinical staff on program and FIT



# 3-Year Plan: 3 Funding Levels

- Year 1
  - Capacity-building statewide: Equipment, medical training, data process, evaluation plan, outreach materials
  - Implementation in 3 Regions of LA (2,000)
- Year 2
  - Capacity-building statewide: Medical training
  - Implementation in 6 Regions of LA (5,000)
- Year 3
  - Capacity-building statewide: Medical training
  - Implementation statewide (6,000)



# 2008 Legislative Session: Advocacy

- Identifying the Key Committees
  - Legislative champions within committees
- Caucus Visits
  - Black Caucus and Women's Caucus
- Grassroots In-District Visits
- LTE Campaign
- Press Conference/Media Support
- Lobby Days



## 2008 Legislative Session: Advocacy

- Budgetary Line-Item vs. Bill
- Importance of demonstrating cost savings over time

*“The funds requested for the 3 years of the screening program are \$4,500,000, or \$1.5 million a year for 3 years. A conservative estimate of the savings from preventing colon cancer is \$10,160,000. So the saving from preventing the cancer minus the cost of the program would result in an overall savings of **\$5,660,000** for the state of Louisiana. “*



# Communication:

- Dialogue with state legislature
- Touch-points with partners
- Face-time at Capitol
- Answering tough legislative questions
  - Follow-through was key
- Testimony
  - Health care providers, program planning committee, advocacy volunteers

We Got Funded!!!  
\$1.5 Million



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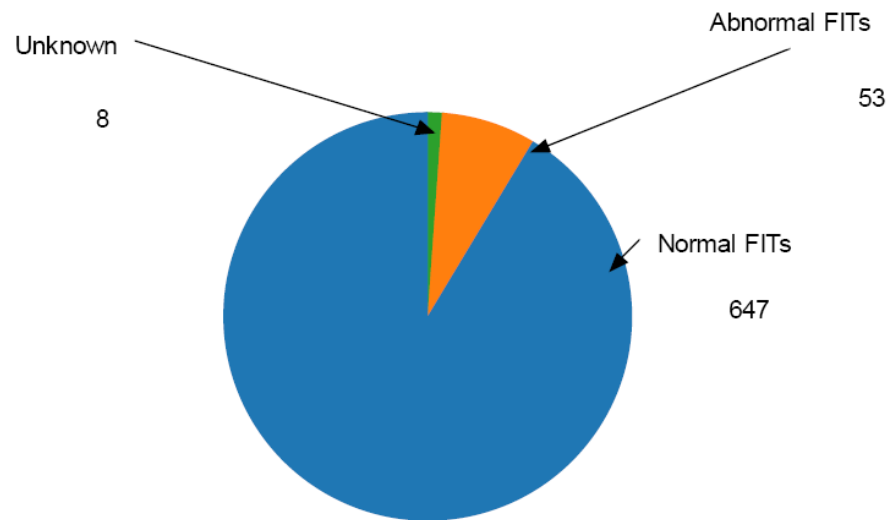


# Program Update: Funding – Present

- 966 People got FIT Test
- 710 People returned FIT

Percent of abnormal FIT tests 7.5%

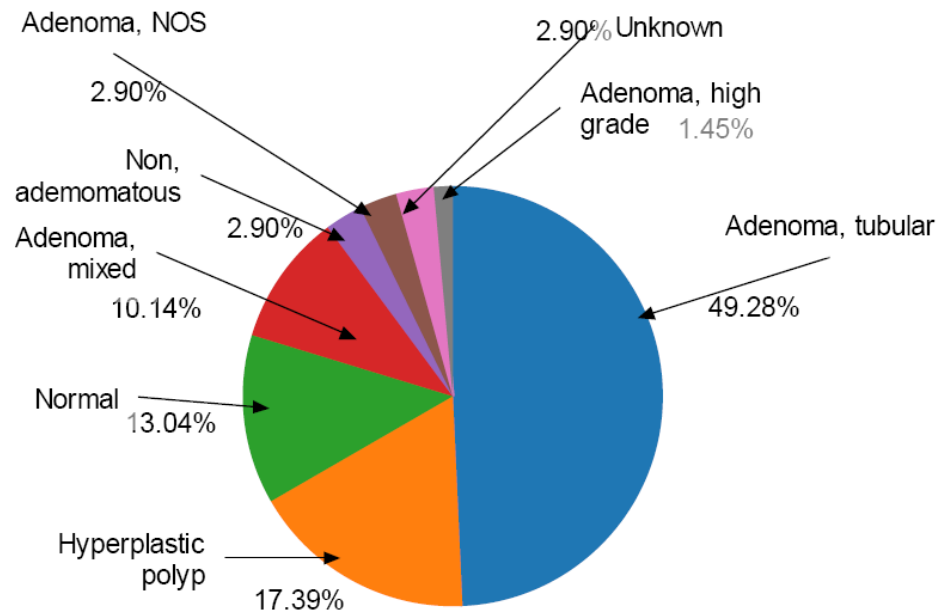
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# Program Update: Funding – Present

- 52 colonoscopies performed
- 69 polyps found and removed

Percentages of Polyp Histology - 69 Polyps removed





## Program Update: Funding - Present

- \$400 million in healthcare funds cut from 2009 budget
- Reported progress to Finance's Health & Welfare Subcommittee
- Testified and built support
- FITCo was saved, but cut by 77%
  - 2008-2009 funding = \$1,500,000
  - 2009-2010 funding = \$350,000



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# Questions?



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Presenter Disclosures  
Rebecca Majdoch, MPH

**(1) The following personal financial relationships with commercial interests relevant to this presentation existed during the past 12 months:**

- No relationships to disclose