

FOR RELEASE
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Funding announced to implement colorectal cancer screening program

WHITEHORSE—The Government of Yukon will invest \$228,000 this year towards implementing a colorectal cancer screening program, subject to legislative approval.

"Colorectal cancer is the second-highest cause of cancer death in Yukon among men and the third-highest among women," Minister of Health and Social Services Mike Nixon said. "Implementing a screening program will enable us to detect cancer earlier and, therefore, reduce mortality."

Cancerous and precancerous cells can be detected with a fecal immunochemical test (FIT). The simple, non-invasive procedure can test for blood in stool, which can be a sign of precancer. If there is an abnormal result in the FIT test, the patient will be referred for a colonoscopy to determine if cancer or precancerous changes might be present.

"The FIT test is a simple and effective screening tool. It will enable us to screen a higher number of Yukoners and allow for earlier intervention, if needed," Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Brendan Hanley said. "It also allows us to use health resources wisely, as only those people that are positive on the FIT test or are otherwise at high risk for colorectal cancer will be recommended for colonoscopy."

Between 2002 and 2012, 174 Yukoners were diagnosed with colon cancer. Of those, 154 were individuals aged 50 years or older.

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