

## Sample Letter to the Editor (Version 1)

Dear Editor:

*My brother Jeff was killed by colorectal cancer.* {Insert personal statement of your own.} Did you know that colorectal cancer is the number two cancer killer among men and women in the United States? I hate that {insert name or relationship with this person} is among the numbers that make up that statistic.

Colorectal Cancer is easy to detect – and if detected early, it is highly treatable. The problem is that all too often it is not found early enough. Most people don't get screened for a variety of reasons:

- Lack of public awareness about colorectal cancer and of the benefits of regular screening. Many people know about screening for breast cancer and prostate cancer, but they are not aware of screening for cancers of the colon and rectum.
- Absence of social support for openly discussing and doing something about diseases of the colon and rectum. Twenty-five years ago people did not talk openly about breast cancer – now we do, and the percentage of people who die of breast cancer is dropping. Because more are screened, we are finding the breast cancer earlier! We need to make colorectal cancer a “public” disease, also.
- Inconsistent promotion of screening by medical care providers.
- Uncertainty among doctors, insurance providers, and consumers about insurance benefits.
- Characteristics of screening procedures (for example, multiple tests, different guidelines for different people, negative attitudes towards the screening procedures that are often seen as “icky” or embarrassing).

Recent studies at Harvard University indicate that over 50% of colorectal cancer deaths could be prevented by regular screening and lifestyle changes. In 2007, an estimated 52,180 people will die from colorectal cancer – screening and lifestyle changes could potentially have saved 30,000 of those lives {including personal statement}. *My brother's death was agonizing. Do whatever it takes to avoid dying like he did.* {Insert Personal Statement}

Talk with your friends and family about colorectal cancer and any history of this disease within your family. Talk with your doctor. If you are over 50, get screened. If you think you might be at higher risk, talk with your doctor about an appropriate early detection strategy for you. Spread the message. It is an important message – it will save lives. The more the word about colorectal cancer gets out, the more lives will be saved. There is power in words!

Sincerely,

*Signature*