

Evidence-Based Interventions to Increase Cancer Screening: **CLIENT REMINDERS**

REMINDERS INCREASE UPTAKE OF CANCER SCREENINGS

A gentle prompt can make the difference between getting a screening on the books or a delay in care.

Health systems can boost cancer screenings just by reminding clients that it's time to schedule a screening. Studies show that client reminders increased breast cancer screenings by 12%, and cervical and colorectal screenings by 10%.¹

To set up a written and/or telephone outreach system for clients who are due for a cancer screening, health care providers should consider their options and choose the ones best suited for the clinic and for the clients:

WRITTEN REMINDERS

- Letters.²
- Postcards.
- Email.
- Patient portal messages.



TELEPHONE MESSAGES

- Direct calls.³
- Text messages.
- Automated messages.⁴



Tailor reminders to your audience (see Colon Cancer Screening Communications Guidebook).⁵ Establish criteria for timing and outreach based on U.S. Preventive Services Task Force⁶ screening guidelines as well as:

- Age.
- Sex.
- Date of last screening.
- Active patient status.
- Risk factors.



STEPS TO DEVELOP A CLIENT REMINDER SYSTEM

- Increase buy-in from staff by seeking input through planning and implementation.
- Assess whether your electronic health record system can generate reports on screenings and link them to reminders. Upgrades may be needed.
- Develop the client reminder system and screening referral protocol.
- Develop messages.
- Identify staff who will generate and send client reminders.
- Integrate the reminder protocol into daily workflow.
- Provide training.
- Decide how patient responses will be documented and how to handle undeliverable reminders.

THINK ABOUT...

- Tailoring method of delivery and the message to your clients.
- Whether patient navigation to address patient barriers can enhance efforts.
- Looking into bulk mailing to decrease cost.
- Tracking undeliverable messages and updating the reminder lists.



DON'T FORGET TO MONITOR AND ADJUST

- Establish a plan for regular evaluation and tweaking of the system.
- Make sure patients were identified appropriately and reminders were generated successfully.
- Document and train on any changes in protocol.



Contact your ScreenOutCancer affiliated state, regional, tribal, or territorial cancer prevention program for partnership opportunities including technical assistance on implementing evidence-based interventions: www.cdc.gov/cancer/nbccedp and www.cdc.gov/cancer/crccp

1 - Sabatino SA, Lawrence B, Elder R, Mercer SL, Wilson KM, DeVinney B, Melillo S, Carvalho M, Taplin S, Bastani R, Rimer BK, Vernon SW, Melvin CL, Taylor V, Fernandez M, Glanz K; Community Preventive Services Task Force. Effectiveness of interventions to increase screening for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancers: nine updated systematic reviews for the guide to community preventive services. American Journal of Preventive Medicine 2012;43(1):97-118. 2 - To see sample letter visit: rtips.cancer.gov/rtips/uploads/RTIPS/-=RT=-/WHE/DoHHS/NIH/NCI/DCCPS/7488.pdf. 3 - To see sample phone script visit: www.cancer.org/content/dam/cancer-org/cancer-control/en/worksheets/fobt-fit-follow-up-phone-script-average-risk-individuals.pdf. 4 - To see sample transcript of automated telephone message visit: rtips.cancer.gov/rtips/uploads/RTIPS/-=RT=-/WHE/DoHHS/NIH/NCI/DCCPS/6405.pdf 5 - Colon Cancer Screening Communications Guidebook, visit: nccrt.org/resource/2017-80-2018-communications-guidebook-recommended-messaging-reach-unscreened 6 - U.S. Preventive Services Task Force screening guidelines, visit: www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/Page/Name/recommendations