

Patient Advocate Corner

C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition — Pushing for Better Research, Faster



Carlea Bauman

By Carlea Bauman

If it's not accompanied by some kind of action, talk is just another four-letter word.

That's the view of C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition. The call to action is part of the vision, the mission, and the day-to-day operations.

What kind of action?

- The inspirational kind that gives people fighting colorectal cancer the determination to go on fighting, and winning.
- The empowering kind that convinces everyone that their voices make a difference. Voices may be those of physicians speaking to colleagues at conferences around the world, or of nurses offering messages of encouragement to patients, or of patients and family members working to convince legislators to take action. They are all voices speaking on behalf of those who battle colorectal cancer.
- And finally, the discovery kind that goes on in laboratories and research institutes and clinical trials. This research is what will provide the medical community and individuals with the ability to win the fight against colorectal cancer.

Why is action so important? Action creates awareness. Awareness creates advocates. Advocates are powerful. Getting the facts about colorectal cancer into the public and Congress is the way to increase the funding that fuels the work that needs to be done.

Breast cancer advocates learned this decades ago. Their accomplishments are striking and vividly illustrate the work that needs to be done by a growing cadre of colorectal cancer advocates. In the battle to require insurance coverage of screening and treatment and for more dollars for research, colorectal cancer lags far behind breast cancer, even though more people die from colorectal cancer each year than from breast cancer.

C3 is not the only colorectal cancer group in existence. But it is the one that resolves, above all else, to keep the ball rolling.

That means constantly finding new ways to create awareness of issues and to get help to the people who need it.

C3 programs attack those challenges from a variety of fronts.

Through Education and Awareness . . .

- A Web site, www.FightColorectalCancer.org, that offers near-daily updates in treatments and research for patients, families and medical professionals.
- A quarterly newsletter, *Momentum*, sent free to the organization's entire constituency.
- The C3 Answer Line at (877) 4CRC-111 ([877] 427-2111) which provides callers with medically reviewed and unbiased information about colorectal cancer.

Through Research . . .

- C3 will award a grant this spring to a researcher exploring treatments for late-stage colorectal cancer.
- C3's third annual Research Advocate Training held earlier this year trained advocates to serve effectively on cooperative groups, Specialized Programs of Research Excellence, and US Food and Drug Administration and National Cancer Institute (NCI) research committees.
- NCI is expected to complete its colorectal cancer progress report this spring, thanks to urging from C3. This report will provide C3 and researchers with a road map for research.

Through Policy . . .

- C3's Cover Your Butt campaign supports three bills that together will provide coverage of nearly every butt in America that should be screened: those belonging to the poor and underserved, the elderly and those with private insurance.
- This month, C3 advocates will lobby their members of Congress in support of the Cover Your Butt campaign. Advocates will make face-to-face visits on Capitol Hill and will also participate in the "C3 Congressional Butt-In," a 1-day phone blitz to Capitol Hill.

To learn how you and your patients can make a difference, visit www.CoverYourButt.org. Education. Research. Policy. At C3, it all adds up to action.

Carlea Bauman, is President of C3: Colorectal Cancer Coalition, Alexandria, VA.

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