



# AMERICAN COLLEGE OF GASTROENTEROLOGY

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April 2, 2008

The Honorable Joe Armstrong  
Chairman, Health and Human Resources Committee  
21 Legislative Plaza  
Nashville, TN 37243

Dear Chairman Armstrong:

We are pleased to offer the support of the American College of Gastroenterology for H.B. 4058/S.B. 4085, the "The Cancer Elimination Act of 2008," which would study the feasibility of creating a state pilot program for uninsured and underinsured women to provide access to colorectal cancer (CRC) screening. Nonetheless, the College is extremely disappointed that the legislature is not seriously considering passing a state colorectal cancer (CRC) screening mandate at this time especially given the sobering statistics that according to American Cancer Society data, 3,290 new cases of colorectal cancer as well as 1,330 deaths from the disease are expected in Tennessee this year.

The American College of Gastroenterology is a physician organization representing gastroenterologists and other gastrointestinal specialists. Founded in 1932, the College currently numbers almost 11,000 physicians among its membership of health care providers of gastroenterology specialty care. Although the vast majority of these physicians are gastroenterologists, the College's membership also includes surgeons, pathologists, hepatologists, and other specialists in various aspects of the overall treatment of digestive diseases and conditions. The College has chosen to focus its activities on clinical gastroenterology – the issues confronting the gastrointestinal specialist in treatment of patients. The primary activities of the College have been, and continue to be, educational efforts directed at promoting and optimizing quality care.

Just a few weeks ago, the respected annual Colorectal Cancer Legislation Report Card initiative, supported by the College, other medical societies, patient groups and the Entertainment Industry Foundation's National Colorectal Cancer Research Alliance, released its fifth annual Colorectal Cancer Legislative Report Card. More than half of the U.S. Population – but not Tennesseans -- is currently covered by legislation requiring insurance carriers operating in the state to include CRC screening in the benefits. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), screening for colorectal cancer lags far behind screening for other cancers. ***Unfortunately, Tennessee is one of only three states earning a "D" grade on the report card, depriving its citizens of higher access to this lifesaving CRC screening.***

A May 2006 study by the American Cancer Society (ACS) found that screening rates in states with coverage laws had risen 40 percent faster between 1999 and 2004 than states without such laws. Indeed, colon cancer is the only cancer that can be detected and treated in the same test – colonoscopy.

Annual Scientific Meeting and Postgraduate Course  
October 3 – 8, 2008, Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center, Orlando, Florida  
[www.acgmeetings.org](http://www.acgmeetings.org)

We support the “Cancer Elimination Act,” and hope is the first step to the enactment of more sweeping CRC coverage legislation, as less than half of all Tennesseans over aged 50 are currently getting screened.

We look forward to working with you on the Cancer Elimination Act and other pieces of CRC screening legislation.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Foxx-Orenstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Amy" being the most prominent.

Amy Foxx-Orenstein, D.O, FACG  
President

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light-colored background that reads "Dan Griffin, M.D.". The signature is cursive and includes the initials "M.D." at the end.

Daniel E. Griffin, M.D., FACG  
ACG Governor for the State of Tennessee

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward L. Cattau, Jr.". The signature is cursive and includes the initials "Jr." at the end.

Edward L. Cattau, Jr., M.D., FACG  
ACG Board Member  
Germantown, Tennessee