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Media Attention to Colonoscopy Does Not Detract from Public Health Success Story

(Bethesda, Maryland, June 2, 2013) – The American College of Gastroenterology expressed disappointment that a front page article in the Sunday June 2, 2013 issue of the *New York Times*, "[The \\$2.7 Trillion Medical Bill](#)," unfairly casts outsized blame for high medical care costs on colonoscopy and, by extension, on gastroenterologists.

In a Letter to the Editor of the *New York Times*, ACG President Ronald J. Vender, MD, FACP, said, "The College stands behind its guideline recommendations for colorectal cancer screening by a range of options, and we maintain our published position that places the highest preference on screening tests such as colonoscopy that prevent colorectal cancer, not just detect it." The aim of the American College of Gastroenterology is to provide the highest quality of colorectal cancer screening based on the best understanding of the clinical evidence as it currently stands. That evidence resoundingly supports colonoscopy with polyp removal as a proven strategy to prevent colorectal cancer.

"While the College shares the concern expressed in this article regarding escalating healthcare costs in the United States, as physicians on the front line diagnosing colorectal cancer, we also share a longstanding commitment to provide the highest quality screening for colorectal cancer at a reasonable, transparent cost to all appropriate candidates," added Dr. Vender.

In the letter, Dr. Vender shared his perspective on the article:

"The roots of the problem of high medical costs in the United States are many, varied and complicated. The fact that the writer chose to focus her attention on the one and only preventive cancer test that has been demonstrated to significantly reduce the incidence of colon cancer and death from the disease is disappointing. The evidence suggests that colonoscopy is a public health success story in this country."

In its letter, the College noted that a wide variety of groups including the United States Preventive Services Task Force, the American Cancer Society, the American College of Radiology, the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy, the American Gastroenterological Association and others support the use of colonoscopy for colorectal cancer screening.

About the American College of Gastroenterology

Founded in 1932, the American College of Gastroenterology (ACG) is an organization with an international membership of more than 12,000 individuals from 80 countries. The College is committed to serving the clinically oriented digestive disease specialist through its emphasis on scholarly practice, teaching and research. The mission of the College is to serve the evolving needs of physicians in the delivery of high quality, scientifically sound, humanistic, ethical, and cost-effective health care to gastroenterology patients. www.gi.org

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