



Date: December 27, 2017

**FOR RELEASE THE WEEK OF:
Immediate Release**

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Watseka – The Iroquois County Public Health Department is now offering Colorectal Cancer Fecal Immunochemical Test (FIT) kits for individuals 50 to 75 years of age who have not had a colonoscopy in the last 10 years, a sigmoidoscopy in the last 5 years, or a history of colon cancer or prior resection.

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in both men and women in the United States and is the second leading cancer killer in the U.S., but it is also largely preventable. It is important to have regular colonoscopies after age 50 to detect polyps and remove them before they turn into cancer. Colorectal cancer is preventable and highly curable when it is found early.

The greatest risk factor of colorectal cancer is the failure to be screened. For many reasons people are resistant to the idea of having a colonoscopy. Many physicians report talking to their patients about the benefits of a colonoscopy only to hear that the patient will NOT have one.

The FIT kits available at ICPHD are a non-invasive screening tool that will detect the presence of blood in your stool. “Although this screening is not meant to take the place of a colonoscopy, it is an option for people looking for a comfortable way to screen for colon cancer,” states Vonda Pruitt, Director of Nursing and Social Services at ICPHD. If your test detects blood in the stool then further follow-up will need to be done to determine the cause of the blood.

Iroquois County Public Health Department can bill Medicare and most insurance companies. The American Cancer Society and Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommend that you repeat FIT screenings once every year or receive a colonoscopy once every 10 years so that polyps can be detected and removed early. Please call us at 815-432-2483 to see if FIT screening is right for you.