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**Contact: Terry Eimen, PIO Officer
(815)432-2483
teimen@co.iroquois.il.us**

Watseka – COLORECTAL CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Colorectal cancer is the third most common cancer in both men and women, and the second most common cause of U.S. cancer deaths when men and women are combined. Colorectal cancer affects all racial and ethnic groups and is most often found in people ages 50 and older.

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. The best way to detect colorectal cancer is to get screened regularly starting at age 50. There are often no signs or symptoms of colorectal cancer – that’s why it’s so important to get screened.

There are several screening test options, including a colonoscopy every ten years, a sigmoidoscopy every five years or a fecal immunochemical test (FIT) every year. The Iroquois County Public Health Department (ICPHD) has FIT kits available for individuals 50 to 75 years of age who have not had a colonoscopy in the last ten years, a sigmoidoscopy in the last five years or a history of colon cancer or prior resection.

The FIT kits available at ICPHD are a non-invasive screening tool that will detect the presence of blood in your stool. “This screening is not meant to take the place of a colonoscopy, but it is an option for people looking for a more 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 ICPHD at 815-432-2483 to see if FIT screening is right for you.