



NYSCC Member Success Story: Colorectal Cancer Screening

During 2005-2009, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention funded five colorectal cancer (CRC) screening demonstration projects around the United States; only one was based in an academic medical center (AMC) rather than a health department. The Suffolk County Preventive Endoscopy Project (Project SCOPE) was a collaborative effort between Stony Brook University Medical Center (SBUMC) and the Suffolk County Department of Health Services. Project SCOPE's objective was to increase CRC screening among Suffolk County residents who were at least 50 years old and who had inadequate or no insurance coverage for CRC screening. The demonstration application drew on the screening, diagnostic and treatment resources of the AMC and the indigent populations using its outpatient clinics.

Patients at ten county health centers were a primary target for (previously inaccessible) colonoscopy screening. The project's organizational center was SBUMC's preventive medicine department, which was linked to SBUMC's large gastroenterology practice. The specific staffing, financial and training issues faced by this project provide insights for others who are similarly interested in community engagement.

During 40 months of screening, 800 indigent, culturally diverse patients were recruited and underwent colonoscopy. Challenges encountered included unreachable referred patients (425 patients; 28% of referrals) and medical ineligibility (e.g., symptomatic comorbid conditions). Pending legislation provided federal funding for a national program offers other AMCs the opportunity to adopt a model such as that proven feasible during Project SCOPE. The lessons learned may have broader application for fostering collaborative AMC partnerships and for enhancing recruitment and retention of participants through outreach.

A full publication of this study can be found in *Academic Medicine*, Volume 85, No. 8/ August 2010, Pages 1354-1361