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## Increasing Colorectal Cancer Screenings for Rural Veterans by Mailing FITs and Adding Telephone Calls

Many people who live in rural areas face distance barriers to getting a colonoscopy. A previous study demonstrated the benefit of mailing fecal immunochemical tests (FIT) to average risk patients overdue for colorectal cancer (CRC) screening. A new, follow-up study sought to determine if including introductory and reminder telephone calls would increase the proportion of returned FITs. Average risk patients overdue for CRC screening received a high intensity intervention (HII), which included the telephone calls. This HII group was compared to the previous low intensity intervention (LII) where only a FIT was mailed. Although both interventions were successful, a higher proportion of FITs were returned out of those mailed in the HII. This study showed that either approach transcends distance to health care facility barriers, especially in rural populations, and would likely improve CRC screening rates.

**Citation:** J Community Health. February 2014 [advance online publication] ◆

### Did You Know?

- Colorectal cancer affects men and women of all racial and ethnic groups, and is most often found in people aged 50 years or older.
- In the United States, it is the third most common cancer for men and women.
- About nine out of every 10 people whose colorectal cancer is found early and treated are still alive five years later.
- Colorectal polyps and colorectal cancer don't always cause symptoms, especially at first. Someone could have polyps or colorectal cancer and not know it.
- While screening rates continue to rise in the U.S., 22 million people are still not up-to-date with colorectal cancer screening.
- People with a first-degree relative (parent, sibling, or child) who has colon cancer are between two and three times greater risk of developing the cancer than those without a family history.
- About 20% of all colorectal cancer patients have a close relative who was diagnosed with the disease.



**Learn more here:** [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov), [www.ccalliance.org/colorectal\\_cancer](http://www.ccalliance.org/colorectal_cancer), [www.cancer.org](http://www.cancer.org) ◆

## VA Announces the First Industry Innovation Competition for 2014

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has announced the first of multiple Industry Innovation Competitions in 2014, which identifies, tests, and evaluates promising innovations that enhance the accessibility and quality of mental health care and services delivered to Veterans.

“VA has established a track record as an innovative organization that welcomes new ideas,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “This competition represents an important way for us to tap the significant pool of talent and expertise inside and outside of government to improve mental health care and services for our Nation’s Veterans, their families, and survivors.”

**Sources:** (<http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pressrelease.cfm?id=2518>) ◆

