



Statement of Senator Dianne Feinstein for  
Senate Cancer Coalition Hearing on the  
Importance of Colorectal Cancer Screening  
March 16, 2005

*Washington, DC – U.S. Senators Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Sam Brownback (R-Kan.), co-chairs of the Senate Cancer Coalition, today held a hearing on the importance of colorectal screening and the future of the virtual colonoscopy.*

*A longtime advocate for advancing the fight against cancer, Senator Feinstein is a vice-chair of C-Change, formerly the National Dialogue on Cancer. She has also been recognized by the American Cancer Society with the National Distinguished Advocacy Award and was also honored by the Breast Cancer Research Foundation as a Funding Hero.*

*Following is the statement of Senator Feinstein:*

**“Good morning and welcome to today’s Senate Cancer Coalition hearing. I am pleased to be joined by Senator Brownback who co-chairs the Senate Cancer Coalition with me at today’s hearing, the first hearing of the 109th Congress.**

**Senator Brownback and I have worked closely on cancer issues for several years and, most recently, we are teaming up to lead the effort in the Senate in support of the Bush Administration’s goal of eliminating cancer death and suffering by the year 2015.**

**This hearing couldn’t be more aptly timed as the month of March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. At today’s hearing we will learn about the latest in colorectal cancer screening technology, how we as a nation are doing at going in for screening and what we can do to improve our screening efforts and improve outcomes for those diagnosed with colorectal cancer.**

**The key to controlling this particular cancer lies in getting screened. If detected in time, colorectal cancer is 90 percent curable.**

**That’s a startling statistic. Especially when you consider that in 2004, there were a total of 145,290 new cases of colorectal cancer diagnosed – 73,470 of them were in women and 71,820 were in men.**

**As we strive to overcome the unpleasantness of talking about this disease, it is important that we pay particular attention to the fact that this is a disease that impacts as many women as it does men. I am pleased that we will hear from Nancy Greenwold later**

**this morning, who can speak about her experience as a woman whose virtual colonoscopy picked up a polyp that wound up being cancerous and is now being treated for colon cancer.**

**According to the CDC, and Dr. George Mensah from the CDC who is here with us this morning can certainly elaborate on this point, screening for colorectal cancer lags far behind screening for breast and cervical cancers. Findings from the National Health Information Survey, which is administered by the CDC, indicate that in 2000, only 42.5% of U.S. adults aged 50 years or older had undergone a sigmoidoscopy or colonoscopy within the previous 10 years.**

**Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the U.S., after lung cancer. This is a disease that will kill an estimated 56,730 Americans annually.**

**The risk of developing this cancer grows with age and, as with most cancers where family history plays a major role, lifestyle factors such as tobacco use, lack of regular physical activity and alcohol consumption also may contribute to an increased risk of colorectal cancer.**

**At today's hearing we will also hear from Joel Siegel. Joel is known to most as ABC News' Entertainment Editor and movie critic, but to many he is also known as a colorectal cancer survivor. Joel will speak firsthand about the importance of getting screened and the impact screening after age 50 can have on the lives of the tens of thousands who are afflicted with this disease each year.**

**Lastly, we will hear from Dr. Abraham Dachman, professor of radiology and Director of Computed Tomography at the University of Chicago. Dr. Dachman wrote the first text on virtual colonoscopy and is considered an expert in the use of this new, non-invasive technology.**

**I look forward to hearing from all of today's witnesses and I will turn the hearing over to Senator Brownback to introduce our first witness, the distinguished Senator from Oklahoma, Senator Tom Coburn."**

**###**