



**Commonwealth of Kentucky
Cabinet for Health and Family Services**

Andy Beshear, Governor

Eric Friedlander, Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Department for Public Health Partners Receives
Grant from Exact Sciences Corp. for Colorectal
Cancer Screening Test Kits for Kentuckians**

***Do-it-Yourself kit for select Kentuckians offers alternative to
colonoscopy***

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Jan. 20, 2021) – The Department for Public Health, an agency of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, today announced receipt of a grant from Madison, Wisc.-based Exact Sciences Corp. for 1,000 Cologuard® At-Home stool DNA colorectal screening test kits. Distribution of these kits will provide greater opportunity for uninsured and underinsured Kentuckians to have access to colon cancer testing that can be done in the privacy of their home.

Cologuard is a take-at-home stool test that utilizes DNA in a regular bowel movement to screen for colon cancer and colon polyps. Exact Sciences is the only company currently offering stool DNA testing for colon cancer, according to the company website. Kits are door-delivered and picked up and returned to the Exact Sciences Lab by the UPS Worldwide Hub in Louisville.

If a Cologuard test result is positive, a colonoscopy is performed to search for and remove polyps in the colon.

Eric Friedlander, secretary of the Cabinet for Health and Family Services, noted that the kits will be available for two years through a program created in statute by the 2008 Kentucky General Assembly, the Kentucky Colon Cancer Screening Program (KCCSP).

“Kentucky has made impressive improvements in increasing colon cancer screening and reducing both incidence and mortality rates for colon cancer,” said Dr. Connie White, deputy commissioner for the Department for Public Health. “Our screening rates have more than doubled from 33 percent to 70.1 percent, improving our ranking from 49th, to 17th.”

The Kentucky Cancer Registry estimates that mortality has fallen 33 percent, which translates to 240 fewer deaths annually in Kentucky. And, colorectal cancer incidence has fallen 30 percent through polyp removal and prevention, which is 400 fewer cases, Dr. White said.

Dr. Whitney F. Jones, founder of the Colon Cancer Prevention Project and chair of the Kentucky Colon Cancer Screening Program advisory committee, described the grant as “a milestone in our vision for innovation, acceleration and most importantly, implementation of evidence-based platforms for colon cancer prevention and control.”

Rocky J. Adkins, advisor to Governor Andy Beshear, free of colon cancer for 25 years, said, “I cannot stress enough the importance of testing and screenings to help detect cancer and save lives.”

Dr. White said, “During this pandemic, many Kentuckians are being extra-cautious about going into public and health care settings for even routine care. This grant provides a wonderful opportunity for eligible individuals to get their colon cancer screening done at home.”

Colorectal cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer death in the U.S. in men and women combined even though it can be effectively prevented or detected early and treated through screening. One in three adults ages 50 to 75 are not screened as recommended according to American Cancer Society (ACS) guidelines. Colorectal cancer is also on the rise in younger adults, prompting ACS to lower the recommended screening age to 45. ACS also stressed the

importance of getting screened and following all positive noninvasive screening tests with a colonoscopy.

“Cost is a well-known barrier to screening and often patients don’t complete a follow-up colonoscopy because they fear a bill,” said Secretary Friedlander. “The General Assembly statute that established KCCSP took this into account. Kentuckians who are eligible to receive a Cologuard kit and whose tests results indicate the need for a colonoscopy will have this expense covered through KCCSP.”

Program eligibility questions may be directed to the Kentucky Colon Cancer Screening Program. Consumers should call the Kentucky Cancer Link at **(877) 597-4655**.

Exact Sciences Corp. is a leading provider of cancer screening and diagnostic tests, Exact Sciences relentlessly pursues smarter solutions providing the clarity to take life-changing action, earlier. Building on the success of Cologuard® and Oncotype DX®, Exact Sciences is investing in its product pipeline to take on some of the deadliest cancers and improve patient care. Exact Sciences unites visionary collaborators to help advance the fight against cancer. For more information, please visit the company's website at www.exactsciences.com, follow Exact Sciences on Twitter @ExactSciences, or find Exact Sciences on Facebook.

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The Cabinet for Health and Family Services is home to most of the state's human services and health care programs, including the Department for Medicaid Services, the Department for Community Based Services the Department for Public Health, the Department for Aging and Independent Living and the Department for Behavioral Health, Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities. CHFS is one of the largest agencies in state government, with nearly 8,000 full- and part-time employees located across the Commonwealth focused on improving the lives and health of Kentuckians.