Missouri Pharmacy Association Awarded Department of Defense PRCRP Grant to Expand Colorectal Cancer Screening and Education Through Community Pharmacies

Jefferson City, MO — August 13, 2026 — The Missouri Pharmacy Association (MPA) announced today that it has been awarded a Department of Defense (DoD) Peer Reviewed Cancer Research Program (PRCRP) grant to expand colorectal cancer (CRC) screening, education, and care coordination across Missouri's community pharmacies. This award is in partnership with UMKC School of Pharmacy, University of Missouri, CPESN Missouri, and CPESN Community Health.

The PRCRP, part of the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs (CDMRP), supports high-impact cancer prevention, detection, treatment, and survivorship research that benefits the American public. This award recognizes Missouri's community pharmacies as a scalable, accessible statewide infrastructure for delivering preventive cancer services to

populations facing barriers such as rural isolation, limited access to care, and low health literacy.

A Statewide Pharmacy-Led Strategy to Improve CRC Screening

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in the United States and remains highly preventable through timely screening. Missouri is projected to see 3,010 new CRC cases and 1,260 deaths in 2025. Despite clear evidence supporting early detection, screening uptake remains suboptimal among average-risk adults aged 45–75.

Through this PRCRP award, MPA will lead a two-arm cluster randomized trial involving 100 pharmacies and 8,000 screening-eligible adults. The initiative embeds CRC screening interventions directly into pharmacy workflows using pharmacy technicians trained as Community Health Workers (PT-CHWs). The PT-CHW model normalizes cancer prevention conversations, supports shared decision-making, and strengthens continuity of care through medication synchronization workflows. This approach creates a replicable national blueprint for embedding preventive cancer care into pharmacies.

"Missouri's pharmacy teams are uniquely positioned to close gaps in colorectal cancer screening," said leadership from the Missouri Pharmacy Association. "This DoD PRCRP award recognizes the essential role pharmacies play in reaching patients where they are, reducing barriers to screening, and supporting early detection that saves lives."

SPHERE: Technical Infrastructure Supporting Statewide CRC Screening

This award strengthens Missouri's statewide clinical infrastructure by integrating CRC screening workflows with SPHERE (System for Pharmacy Health Encounter Reporting and Evaluation), MPA's secure, interoperable data platform designed to capture, normalize, and exchange pharmacy-generated clinical information.

SPHERE will serve as the centralized data backbone for the CRC initiative. The platform enables structured clinical documentation for CRC education, referrals, and colonoscopy navigation. It supports interoperable data exchange with statewide health information systems and normalizes pharmacy-generated clinical data for quality reporting and population-level analysis, while its secure storage and audit controls align with federal data protection standards. By integrating CRC screening into SPHERE's existing architecture, MPA ensures that preventive cancer services are supported by consistent documentation, reliable data pathways, and scalable statewide reporting. The platform also supports longitudinal patient engagement through traditional dispensing workflows, including medication synchronization, enabling pharmacies to maintain ongoing contact with patients overdue for screening.

The Defense Health Agency Contracting Activity, 808 Schreider Street, Fort Detrick MD 21702-5014 is the awarding and administering acquisition office.

About the Missouri Pharmacy Association

The Missouri Pharmacy Association (MPA) is the statewide professional organization representing pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and pharmacy teams across all practice settings. MPA advances patient-centered care, rural health transformation, and the integration of pharmacy services into Missouri's broader healthcare system.