

HEALTH

Colorectal Screening Saves Lives

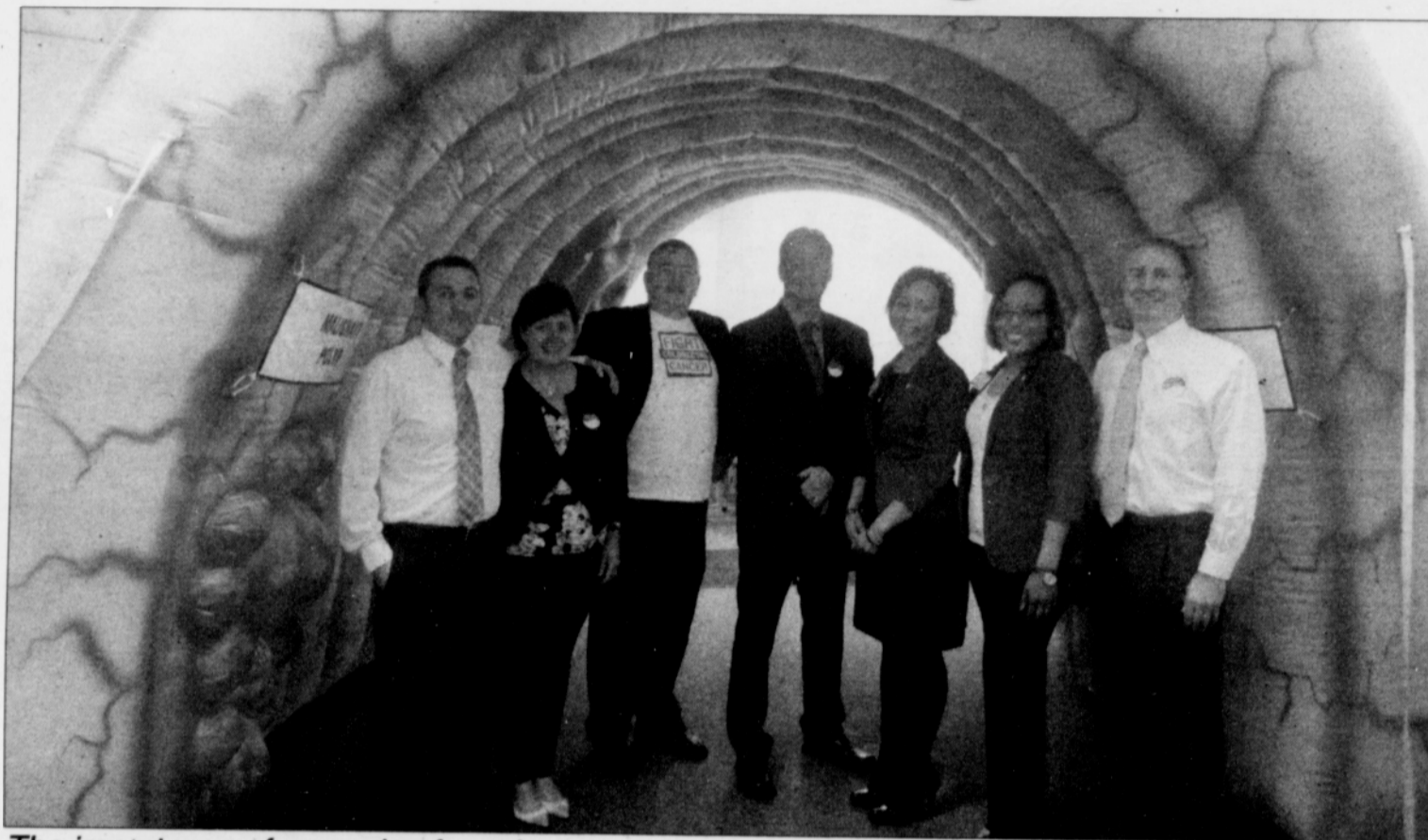
Procedure can detect cancer before symptoms occur

Tami Mahrt was two years past the recommended age for colorectal cancer screening. Though she considered herself healthy at 52 years old, she finally went in for her colonoscopy and awoke from the routine procedure with shocking news. Doctors spotted a 4.5 centimeter growth in her colon and said they'd need to remove it with surgery.

Mahrt, a manager of operations for the Multnomah County Employee Benefits Office, shared her story during a recent Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month presentation before the Board of County Commissioners.

The event included an interactive exhibit about colorectal cancer by Providence Cancer Center and Sanofi Oncology.

Colorectal cancer is cancer of the colon (large intestine) and rectum. Of cancers that affect both men and



The importance of screening for colon cancer is the message of Multnomah County commissioners and public health officials. Pictured inside a "Strollin' Colon" traveling exhibit to build awareness on the health care issue are presenters Matthew Conrad, Tami Mahrt, Tom Foeller, Kent Johns, LaRisha Baker, Marsha Baker and Dr. Mike Whiteford.

women, colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in Multnomah County and across the nation, according to the Multnomah County Health Department.

Colorectal cancer screening, including a colonoscopy, finds abnormal growths called polyps in the colon before they can turn into cancer. Screening also helps find colorectal cancer at an early stage,

when treatment often leads to a cure. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends regular colorectal cancer screening for those 50 to 75 years of age.

At the board presentation, LaRisha and Marsha Baker, co-founders of the Steve Baker Colorectal Cancer Alliance, joined Tom Foeller, an advocate and colorectal cancer survivor, and Dr. Mark Whiteford, director of the Providence colorectal surgery program and director at the Oregon Clinic, in urging people to undergo a colonoscopy before symptoms occur.

"We could cure colon cancer in about 85 percent of patients if we all got proper screening," Dr. Whiteford said.

Commissioner Loretta Smith brought forward the proclamation. Chair Marissa Madrigal's mother survived colorectal cancer 14 years ago. Commissioner Diane McKeel thanked them saying that she regularly was screened after her own father had died of colon cancer at 51.

"It is so, so important for everyone to have those colonoscopies done," McKeel said.

After turning 50, Tami Mahrt told the board that knew she was due for a colonoscopy, a procedure where a long, flexible tube with a tiny camera at the end is inserted into the rectum and used to view the inside of the entire colon. Like many people, she put off scheduling the procedure.

Mahrt says she felt she had no reason to worry. She had always been healthy. At that time, she was a senior associate for Mercer, an international human resources con-

sulting firm, and she hadn't taken a sick day in eight years. She had yearly physicals and there was no indication that there was any problem at all. She was confident she didn't need to be screened.

Peer pressure helped her finally make an appointment.

"I was having a glass of wine with some girlfriends and one of them asked each one of us if we'd had our colonoscopies yet," Mahrt says. So, she scheduled hers.

After her colonoscopy, Mahrt was diagnosed with Stage I colorectal cancer. The cancer was self-contained and hadn't yet spread to surrounding tissue. Her surgeon was able to remove all the cancerous tissue and she did not require chemotherapy or radiation. Because her type of cancer can grow back quickly, her follow-up care has required exams every three months for a two-year period and a colonoscopy each year. She has recently graduated to an exam once each year and a colonoscopy every three years.

"It was a miracle that I went in when I did," Mahrt says. "I've had two doctors tell me that I would not be alive today if they hadn't found and removed the cancer when they did."

The Centers for Disease Control states that recommended screenings could prevent up to 60 percent of all deaths from colorectal cancer.

According to the American Cancer Society, most colorectal cancers occur in people without a family history of colorectal cancer. Still, as many as one in five people who develop colorectal cancer have other family members who have been affected by this disease. People with a history of colorectal cancer in one or more first-degree relatives (parents, siblings, or children) are at increased risk.

Mahrt says she had a biological aunt who died of colorectal cancer, but she never considered that as adding to her risk. Mahrt says because of this increased risk, her son, Matthew Conrad, will need to be screened once he turns 40 in six years.

"I'm happy to tell my story, because I wouldn't be here without having had my colonoscopy," Mahrt says. She adds that the colonoscopy was a "piece of cake" compared to the surgery and follow-up tests, "none of which are pleasant."

"We can change colorectal cancer rates by having our routine colonoscopies," she says. "If I can affect just one person, it will be good."

Tell us what you think: Regional planning 45-day comment period

Our decisions today will determine the future of the region for generations to come.

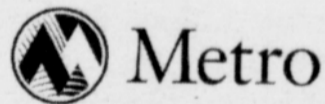
Climate Smart Communities Scenarios
The Oregon Legislature has required the Portland metropolitan region to reduce per capita greenhouse gas emissions from cars and small trucks by 2035. Your thoughts will help shape a draft recommendation that will be considered this fall.

2014 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) The RTP is the long-term blueprint to guide transportation investments throughout the region. The 2014 RTP update compiles elements of adopted transportation plans of cities and counties across the region and includes priority projects, safety recommendations, an active transportation plan and freight updates.

2015-18 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) The MTIP is a four-year schedule of the spending of federal transportation money and state and local funds in the metropolitan region. It also demonstrates how MTIP projects comply with federal regulations regarding eligibility, air quality impacts, environmental justice and public involvement.

Previous generations have laid the groundwork for us, but we must decide how we will move forward to meet new challenges and opportunities. Metro is asking residents across the region if we are on the right track and how you want the region to look in 20 years.

Visit www.oregonmetro.gov/participate Friday, March 21 through Monday, May 5.



Metro has prepared the 2014 RTP and 2014-18 MTIP as required by federal law. The documents are available for public review and comment through this comment period. Download the documents at www.oregonmetro.gov/rtp and www.oregonmetro.gov/mtip or call 503-797-1776 to request copies. Metro's public participation process for the 2014-18 MTIP is designed to satisfy SMART's regional coordination requirements for the program of projects.

March 21 through May 5, submit comments online, by mail to Metro Planning, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland, OR 97232, by email to rtp@oregonmetro.gov or by phone at 503-797-1750 or TDD 503-797-1804.

The Metro Council is scheduled to hold a public hearing and take preliminary action on the RTP 2 p.m. Thursday, May 15 at Metro Regional Center, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland.

Esta es una notificación de su oportunidad para comentar sobre las prioridades de transporte en la región. Para recibir una traducción de la notificación pública completa en español, llame al 503-797-1700 (de 8 a.m. a 5 p.m. los días de semana).

Đây là thông báo về cơ hội của quý vị được trình bày ý kiến đối với các ưu tiên về chuyên chở trong vùng. Muốn nhận được bản dịch đầy đủ của thông báo bằng Tiếng Việt, xin gọi số 503-797-1700 (từ 8 giờ sáng đến 5 giờ chiều vào những ngày thường).

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Настоящим уведомляем, что у вас есть возможность оставить свой отзыв относительно приоритетов транспортного развития в вашем регионе. Русскую версию настоящего оповещения можно запросить по номеру 503-797-1700 в рабочие дни с 8:00 до 17:00.

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