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**ASGE'S BIRTHDAY E-CARD REMINDS RECIPIENTS TO GET SCREENED
FOR COLORECTAL CANCER!**

*Study shows that sending screening reminders near a birthday increases
colorectal cancer screenings*

OAK BROOK, Ill. – March 9, 2009 – The American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy (ASGE) has created a birthday e-Card featuring cartoon characters Peter and Polly Polyp™ that reminds recipients age 50 and over to get screened for colorectal cancer, also referred to as colon cancer. According to a recent study from researchers in Norway, screening reminders sent during the holiday season in December or near an individual's birthday increased colorectal cancer screenings. If you have a loved one 50 or over who hasn't been screened for colorectal cancer, log on to www.screen4coloncancer.org to send ASGE's birthday e-Card and encourage them to take charge of their health and get screened!

"Receiving a birthday e-Card reminder to get screened for colorectal cancer is a fun way for people to let a loved one know that you care about their health and want them around for many more birthdays to come," said John L. Petrini, MD, FASGE, president of the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy. "March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month and the ASGE encourages patients age 50 and over to talk to their doctor about getting screened for this largely preventable disease."

The animated flash e-Card depicts a birthday celebration with the main message "Don't let Peter and Polly Polyp™ crash your birthday party. Get screened for colon cancer today...Ask your doctor about getting screened for colon cancer, it could save your life." Senders can choose from two versions of the e-Card, one for a male recipient and one for a female recipient. Each card allows the sender to customize the card with a personal message.

ASGE has also created a Facebook page for Peter and Polly Polyp™. The Facebook page includes information on colorectal cancer prevention, links to the e-Card, how to find a qualified doctor, questions to ask your doctor before getting screened and educational videos. If you are on Facebook, be sure to log on and find Peter and Polly's page by using the search term "Peter and Polly Polyp."

About www.screen4coloncancer.org

ASGE, which represents the specialists in colorectal cancer screening, developed the www.screen4coloncancer.org Web site to educate patients about colorectal cancer prevention. The site offers visitors a wealth of vital information including disease facts about colorectal cancer, screening options, what to expect during a colonoscopy, frequently asked questions, the latest news about colorectal cancer such as studies and statistics, links to patient support and advocacy groups, educational videos, and how to find a qualified doctor in your area. The content is available in English, Spanish and Chinese. New this year to www.screen4coloncancer.org is a patient education video on colonoscopy. This informative video walks patients through what they need to know before, during and after a colonoscopy.

About Colorectal Cancer

Colorectal cancer is cancer that develops in the colon (large intestine) or the rectum, and usually develops slowly over a period of many years. Before a true cancer develops, it usually begins as a non-cancerous polyp, which may eventually change into cancer. A polyp is a growth of tissue that develops on the lining of the colon or rectum. Certain kinds of polyps, called adenomas, are most likely to become cancerous. The only screening method that allows for the removal of polyps BEFORE cancer develops is colonoscopy.

All men and women over the age of 50 should be routinely screened for colorectal cancer. Colorectal cancer is a preventable and highly treatable cancer when caught at an early stage. Routine screening can save lives. Recent statistics show that the incidence (the rate at which new cancers are diagnosed) and death rates from colorectal cancer are declining, in part due to prevention through screening and removing precancerous polyps. ASGE screening guidelines recommend that, beginning at age 50, men and women with no symptoms who are at average risk for developing colorectal cancer should have a colonoscopy every 10 years. If you have a family history of colorectal cancer or polyps, you should talk with your doctor because you may need to be screened prior to age 50. Colorectal cancer is the third most commonly diagnosed cancer and the third leading cause of cancer death in both men and women in the United States, with nearly 150,000 new cases diagnosed each year. Approximately 50,000 people die from it annually.

Although colorectal cancer often has no symptoms, warning signs that may indicate colorectal cancer include blood in your stools, narrower than normal stools, unexplained abdominal pain, unexplained change in bowel habits, unexplained anemia, and unexplained weight loss. These symptoms may be caused by other benign diseases such as hemorrhoids, inflammation in the colon or irritable bowel syndrome. However, if you have any of these symptoms, you should be evaluated by your doctor.

The ASGE recommends talking to your doctor about screening options. If you are looking for a qualified physician in your area, please log on to www.screen4coloncancer.com or www.asge.org and click on "Find a Doctor."

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About the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy

Founded in 1941, the mission of the American Society for Gastrointestinal Endoscopy is to be the leader in advancing patient care and digestive health by promoting excellence in gastrointestinal endoscopy. ASGE, with nearly 11,000 members worldwide, promotes the highest standards for endoscopic training and practice, fosters endoscopic research, recognizes distinguished

contributions to endoscopy, and is the foremost resource for endoscopic education. Visit www.asge.org and www.screen4coloncancer.org for more information and to find a qualified doctor in your area.

About Endoscopy

Endoscopy is performed by specially-trained physicians called endoscopists using the most current technology to diagnose and treat diseases of the gastrointestinal tract. Using flexible, thin tubes called endoscopes, endoscopists are able to access the human digestive tract without incisions via natural orifices. Endoscopes are designed with high-intensity lighting and fitted with precision devices that allow viewing and treatment of the gastrointestinal system.