

Call for ‘People Power’ to Demand More Life-saving Cancer Screening

Brussels 4 March 2020: Digestive Cancers Europe has launched a pan-European social media campaign to promote colorectal cancer screening at the start of European Colon Cancer Awareness Month (ECCAM).

Building on the highly successful 2019 theme #My10Seconds, this year’s ECCAM campaign, #Beautiful Lives, will focus on mobilising public support for greater availability of colorectal cancer (CRC) screening across Europe, through the world’s platform for social change, Change.org via the petition link: www.change.org/BeautifulLives.

“There’s an injustice across Europe that’s costing lives”, says DiCE Director, Jola Gore-Booth. “CRC is the continent’s third most common cancer and fully treatable if you identify it early. And there’s a simple, ten-second test for doing that. But the test is only available in very few of the 27 countries in the EU. Our challenge is to get this test, known as the FIT, adopted so that everyone has the chance to detect CRC early – and save their life”.

The 2020 campaign is designed to connect with citizens through a positive and inspiring theme, ‘Life is Beautiful, Right?’ and will invite citizens to help other people – rather than directly raising anxiety about their own personal health – via a direct and easily followed call to action.

The #Beautiful Lives campaign will use the proven power of Facebook and Instagram to motivate European citizens to help DiCE challenge Europe’s policymakers by signing a petition to demand universal access to colorectal cancer screening. By focusing single-mindedly on the core message: ‘help prevent 100,000 unnecessary deaths a year’ DiCE is targeting 1 million signatures over 6 months through the Change.org platform. National support will be provided by Digestive Cancers Europe’s 30 Member Groups in 27 countries across Europe.

Every year, 370,000 citizens in the European Union are diagnosed with colorectal cancer and 170,000 of them die. Patients who are detected early (Stage I), have a 90% chance of survival as compared to only 10% when detected in stage IV. Despite the fact that colorectal cancer evolves slowly, over a period of eight to ten years, the majority of patients are still detected in the late stages III & IV.

“This makes the case for early screening an easy one, especially because the treatment of early-stage cancer is cheaper than late stage, and over €3 billion of savings could be generated in the healthcare system every year”, says DiCE CEO Stefan Gijssels. “Making people aware of the benefits of detecting colorectal cancer early by taking the screening test could save an additional 100,000 lives every year”.

The Public Awareness Campaign will be launched through social media in Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Spain. Supporting materials will be distributed in local languages in a further 12 EU countries.

“This year’s campaign will extend our message across the majority of European countries and continue to drive awareness of the need for early CRC screening”, comments Jola Gore-Booth. “With a million signatures, we can truly save many lives by getting the policy makers to sit up and take notice”.

European Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month was established in 2008 as an Annual Awareness Raising initiative by EuropaColon, which has now expanded to become Digestive Cancers Europe (DiCE). The Organisation gives a voice to people living with all types of digestive cancer (including colorectal cancer, gastric cancer, oesophageal cancer, pancreatic cancer and rare gastrointestinal cancers).

All the materials of the campaign are available on <https://digestivecancers.eu/>

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About Digestive Cancers Europe

Digestive Cancers Europe is a cancer action group that has grown out of EuropaColon, which has been representing the voice of the colorectal cancer community for almost 15 years with 30 member groups in 27 countries across Europe.

Digestive Cancers Europe’s aim is to save lives by bringing together all key stakeholders in the fight against these cancers. The organisation campaigns for the adoption of best practices in prevention, diagnosis, treatment and follow up. Its mission is to contribute to early diagnosis and decreased mortality from digestive cancers and to increase overall survival and quality of life.

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