

# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES CONNECTED AND ENGAGED

ISSUE 37, MARCH 2024

## DIRECTOR'S NOTE

March is upon us, ushering in warmer days and plenty of opportunity to get outside! In the beauty of this season, we also observe Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month, where we raise awareness while promoting early detection and prevention. This month, you may have seen our Office of Community Outreach & Engagement (OCOE) team in your streets, at navy blue events and even UAB Hospital's Colon on the Corner; and the month is not done!

We continue to partner with folks across the UAB enterprise, federally qualified health systems, community organizations, government organizations and industry to be a part of the solution. We value all of our partners, most of all, YOU! You are helping us to spread the word about cancer awareness and prevention all year. Talk about cancer awareness! I want to give a big round of applause to **Kathy Levy and Choctaw County, Alabama CHAs** who shared cancer awareness information to over 11,000 people in 2023! Starting the year off right, **Debbie Hill and Humphries County, Mississippi CHAs** claimed the title of Top Engagers for January 2024. Stay tuned to see who comes out on top in the next few months.

Each of you are helping us set our agenda. We asked, and you responded. I want to extend a special thank you to the more than 150 individuals who participated in our focal cancer survey! Based on your feedback, our OCOE will now focus on the following cancers: **brain,**

**breast, cervical, colon/rectum, lung, pancreas, and prostate.** With these focal cancers, we know that we can stress not only cancer screening for those cancers that have available tests but also healthy lifestyle behaviors, like healthy diet and physical activity. You helped us make a very difficult decision. The OCOE looks forward to engaging you in our education and empowerment sessions around these foci!

Lastly, something new coming this April is the April Regional Wellness event in Jefferson County. The event will be hosted on April 20th at the Birmingham Crossplex! Whether you come as a participant or volunteer, we hope to see your face in the place.

- **Dr. Nolan**

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- April 20, 2024



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**O'NEAL** COMPREHENSIVE  
CANCER CENTER  
UAB THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM

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# HEALTH CORNER

## Regional Wellness Day

The O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB's Office of Community Outreach & Engagement is sponsoring a day of holistic wellness for residents of central Alabama. The inaugural Regional Wellness Day will feature free screenings for common health concerns like glucose levels and blood pressure, as well as cancer screenings for age-eligible individuals. Attendees will have the opportunity to participate in group workouts, receive health awareness information, and interact with professionals from healthcare and community-based organizations. Lastly, we will offer opportunities for participation in clinical research.



The Regional Wellness Day in Central Alabama will be April 20, 2024 from 10 a.m. - 2p.m. at the Birmingham Crossplex. We hope to serve 200 community members with at least 50 opting to participate in cancer screenings of some sort.

### WELLNESS SCREENINGS OFFERED:

- ▶ **Breast Exams**
- ▶ **Cervical Exams**
- ▶ **Prostate Exams** (Blood Test)
- ▶ **Colorectal Exams**
- ▶ **HIV Testing**
- ▶ **STD Testing**
- ▶ **Hepatitis C**
- ▶ **COVID 19 Vaccine**
- ▶ **Biometric Screenings:**  
(Weight, Blood Pressure, Cholesterol, Blood Sugar)
- ▶ **AND MORE!**



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## Gunnells discusses updated colon cancer screening guidelines, screening techniques discussed on UAB MedCast Podcast

By: Emme Stewart

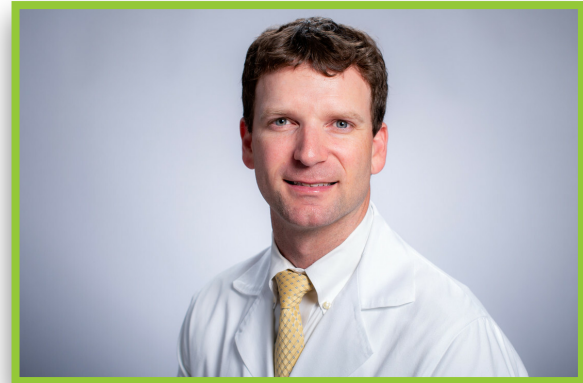
UAB Division of Gastrointestinal Surgery Assistant Professor Drew J. Gunnells, Jr., M.D., was recently featured on UAB's MedCast Podcast with Division of Gastroenterology Associate Professor Shajan Peter, M.D., to discuss the future of colorectal cancer and screening techniques.

In the podcast episode, Gunnells reminds listeners that the current guidelines for colon cancer screening now reflect a suggested first screening at age 45, instead of 50.

"The same principles of people that need to get screened earlier still apply," adds Gunnells. "Some need to be screened even younger than 45 ... if someone [has a] high risk [factor]."

Gunnells also noted in the discussion that the UAB-Cooper Green partnership allows Jefferson County residents who meet certain criteria to receive free colonoscopies.

For those who may be hesitant about the colonoscopy process, Gunnells adds that the procedure is one of the few ways that can actually detect and prevent colon cancer through



the detection and removal of pre-cancerous polyps.

Recent technological advancements utilizing artificial intelligence can detect polyps that are not visible through standard examination measures – preventing later complications and additional procedures.

To listen to the full episode, visit the UAB MedCast website.



For more information on the UAB-Cooper Green Colon Cancer collaboration visit: [go.uab.edu/cgcolon](http://go.uab.edu/cgcolon)

## Colon Cancer Awareness - Wear Blue Day

A Colon Cancer Awareness event was held on Thursday, March 21 at the Regional Medical Center of Central Alabama in Greenville, Alabama (RMCCA). This event was held in partnership between OCOE and the Regional Medical Center of Central Alabama.

The event provided education on colon health and screening while individuals learned how to receive their screening at RMCCA. Manu Kaushik, M.D., the assistant professor in the Division of Gastro-intestinal Surgery at UAB, and his team assisted individuals with all questions and concerns. Lastly, participants were able to walk through a large inflatable colon to view a display of healthy cells that live inside the colon to learn the difference between those cells that may cause cancer.



Scan here for ways  
to give to OCOE!

# Raspberry-Peach Yogurt Smoothie

HEALTHY  
RECIPE

This creamy smoothie is a great on-the-go breakfast. Not only that, it's a great way to get calcium and two servings of fruit in a jiffy.

## Ingredients

- 1 cup frozen raspberries
- 1 cup frozen peaches
- 1 (6-ounce) container nonfat plain or vanilla yogurt
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup apple juice

## Directions

1. In a blender, combine raspberries, peaches, yogurt, and juice. Process until smooth.

If you prefer a tarter drink, use plain yogurt.

For a slightly sweeter drink, add a teaspoon or so of honey or use vanilla yogurt.

Source: The American ICancer Society

