

urge all of my colleagues to support this important legislation.

#### BACKGROUND

The statistics surrounding colon cancer are startling. Colon cancer is the number two cancer killer in the United States. Nearly 50,000 people will die this year from this disease. According to the American Cancer Society (2009 Fact & Figures), of the nearly 50,000 people expected to die from colorectal cancer in 2009, early detection could save more than half. These statistics alone are a tragedy.

But the statistics become even more tragic when one considers that colorectal cancer is highly preventable with appropriate screening. And the disease is detectable, treatable, and curable if found early. According to the American Cancer Society (2009 Facts & Figures), the 5 year survival rate is 90 percent for those diagnosed at an early stage; however, only 40 percent of the cases are diagnosed at the stage.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recognizes the preventable nature of this disease and provides its only grade 'A' recommendation of cancer screenings for colorectal cancer screens.

Unfortunately, almost half of the Medicare population is not being screened, despite the availability of a Medicare colon cancer screening benefit. According to CMS, Medicare claims indicate that only 52 percent of beneficiaries have had a colorectal cancer test and there is "clearly an opportunity to improve colorectal cancer screening rates in the Medicare population." (CMS website "overview of colorectal cancer screening")

Numerous barriers account for this fact, including structural issues in the Medicare program, significant Medicare cuts to providers, and lack of knowledge and preparation among patients.

#### THE SCREEN ACT

The SCREEN Act is designed to address these barriers and increase the participation of patients in this preventive service. The bill accomplishes this in several main ways.

#### REDUCING PATIENT BARRIERS

First, the bill would reduce patient barriers to being screened. The legislation would waive Medicare co-insurance for diagnostic and screening colorectal cancer tests in order to increase utilization.

In addition, the bill would provide coverage for a pre-operative visit with a physician prior to a screening colonoscopy. This is the standard of care, but is not currently covered by Medicare.

Finally, under the legislation all Medicare beneficiaries will be notified about the Medicare colorectal cancer screening benefit and reminded of the benefits periodically.

These common sense steps will ensure that more patients are screened and more lives are saved.

#### PROVIDER QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

We must also ensure that there are adequate numbers of high-quality physicians performing colonoscopies. The legislation reverses years of provider reimbursement cuts by creating a preventive services payment modifier for colorectal cancer screens that is adequate to incentivize physicians to perform colorectal cancer screens. It would base this incentive on a national colorectal cancer

screening goal established by the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

The bill would also require the Secretary to establish a national minimum standard for basic knowledge, training, continuing education and documentation for physicians and facilities. A physician would not be permitted to receive the preventive services modifier if he or she did not meet this standard.

#### STATE INTERVENTIONS TO INCREASE SCREENING

The legislation would also support state-level interventions to increase colorectal cancer screening. The legislation authorizes grants to states for colorectal cancer programs that include: screening to high risk individuals; case management and referrals for treatment; follow up and care for individuals screened; health professional education, training, and skills; and public information and education programs.

#### INFORMATION ON WHAT WORKS

Finally, the legislation gathers information on best practices in incentivizing colorectal cancer screening. The bill requires reporting on screening rates and interventions in Medicare Advantage and commissions a study by the Secretary of HHS on levels of coinsurance for screening tests under private plans.

#### CONCLUSION

More than 50,000 Americans will die from colon cancer this year alone. Ninety percent of these cases might have been prevented. We cannot afford to wait another moment before doing something to eliminate these and other barriers that are standing in the way of preventing colon cancer.

Therefore, I urge all of my colleagues to co-sponsor the Supporting Colorectal Examination and Education Now (SCREEN) Act and support its passage this year.

#### TRIBUTE TO MOHAWK VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

#### HON. MICHAEL A. ARCURI

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 14, 2009*

Mr. ARCURI. Madam Speaker, I rise today to recognize Mohawk Valley Community College (MVCC) for its extraordinary record of athletic achievement.

Under the direction of head coach Gary Parker, the Women's Outdoor Track and Field team finished the 2008–09 season with a 25–0 record against two-year college competition and earned first place at the National Junior College Athletic Association (NJCAA) Division III National Championship, marking the program's fourth national title.

The Women's Cross Country team, also under head coach Gary Parker, finished its season with an undefeated 25–0 record against two-year college competition, and rounded out the year by winning the NJCAA Division III National Championship, the program's ninth national title. Coupled with the Men's team's second place finish, MVCC's cross country program earned the coveted Pepsi Cup, an award given to the college with the best combined finish at the National Championships.

Looking more broadly at college's 20 competitive intercollegiate athletics programs, MVCC won last year's second place trophy at the National Alliance of Two-Year College Athletic Administrators Cup competitions for its overall performance in the non-scholarship division's national championships. In the last six years this competition has been held, MVCC has never taken anything less than fourth place.

The aforementioned achievements represent the continuation of decades of success for MVCC's athletic programs. With one of the largest and most diverse two-year college intercollegiate athletic programs in the country, MVCC is home to 17 national championships, 107 individual national champions and 330 NJCAA All-Americans. Madam Speaker, I am honored to represent such talented and dedicated athletes in my district. I ask that my colleagues join me in congratulating the MVCC Hawks and wishing them the best of luck in their future athletic and scholarly endeavors.

#### TRIBUTE TO MS. GRETCHEN WILSON

#### HON. MARSHA BLACKBURN

OF TENNESSEE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Monday, September 14, 2009*

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Madam Speaker, I rise today to ask my colleagues to join me in honoring Grammy Award winner and country music recording artist, Ms. Gretchen Wilson, as she receives the 2009 National Coalition for Literacy Leadership Award at The Library of Congress. Gretchen is being recognized by the National Coalition for Literacy and the Center for the Book for her contributions to the advancement of adult education and literacy.

Until recently, the multi-platinum acclaimed singer/songwriter was one of millions of Americans who had not finished their high school education. Ms. Wilson left high school to pursue her music career; she has since had three #1 albums. Last year at the age of 34, Gretchen earned her G.E.D. Her friend and mentor, Charlie Daniels, was guest speaker at her graduation ceremony at the First Baptist Church in Lebanon, TN.

As a mother, it was important for Gretchen to lead by example and demonstrate to her eight-year-old daughter, Grace, just how important it is to have an education. Gretchen is currently teaming up with the Dollar General Literacy Foundation to honor GED students and organizations dedicated to the advancement of literacy.

Ms. Wilson has won Female Vocalist of the Year from both the Country Music Association and the Academy of Country Music and a Grammy Award for Best Female Country Vocal Performance. She also had her first book and autobiography, "Redneck Woman: Stories from My Life," appear on the New York Times Best Seller List.

Madam Speaker, I congratulate Gretchen on her hard work, resilience, and many notable achievements and ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing her dedication and contributions to adult education and literacy awareness.