

Launching Colorectal Cancer Screening in Worksites in Alabama

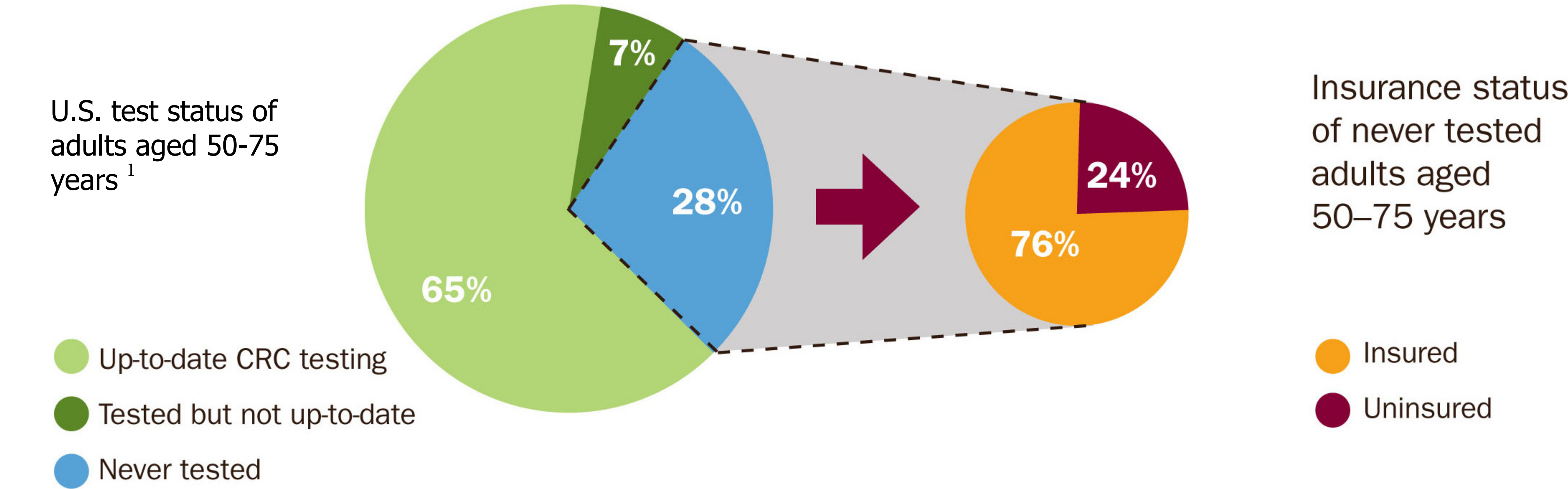
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Background

The FITWAY Colorectal Cancer (CRC) Prevention Program has been funded since 2009 as part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Colorectal Cancer Control Program (CRCCP). FITWAY seeks to increase CRC screening rates to 80 percent through population level approaches and evidence-based strategies. FITWAY works through guidance from Alabama’s American Cancer Society (ACS) Roundtable partners and our Medical Advisory Board resulting in stronger efforts in worksites and in hospital systems. In order to increase public awareness, reduce structural barriers, and provide increased access to CRC screening, diagnostics, and treatment, FITWAY and its partners are promoting FIT/iFOBT screening in worksite wellness programs. CRC screening and awareness activities fit naturally in worksites.

Why Worksites?

- In Alabama large employers carry the health cost risk
- 80.2 percent of Alabamians aged 50-75 who are not up-to-date on CRC screening have some form of health care coverage (nationally this figure is 76 percent, see pie chart below)
- Many employees have insurance coverage for diagnostic colonoscopies and treatment
- Employers cover not just employees, but also spouses and retirees
- Worksite screening...
 - Optimizes adherence to annual testing when paired with biometric screening or flu shots
 - Brings screening to the patient
 - Is ideal for people who do not have a medical home
 - Reaches men who are less likely to go to the doctor
 - Uses existing community structures for education about CRC and instruction



Why FIT?

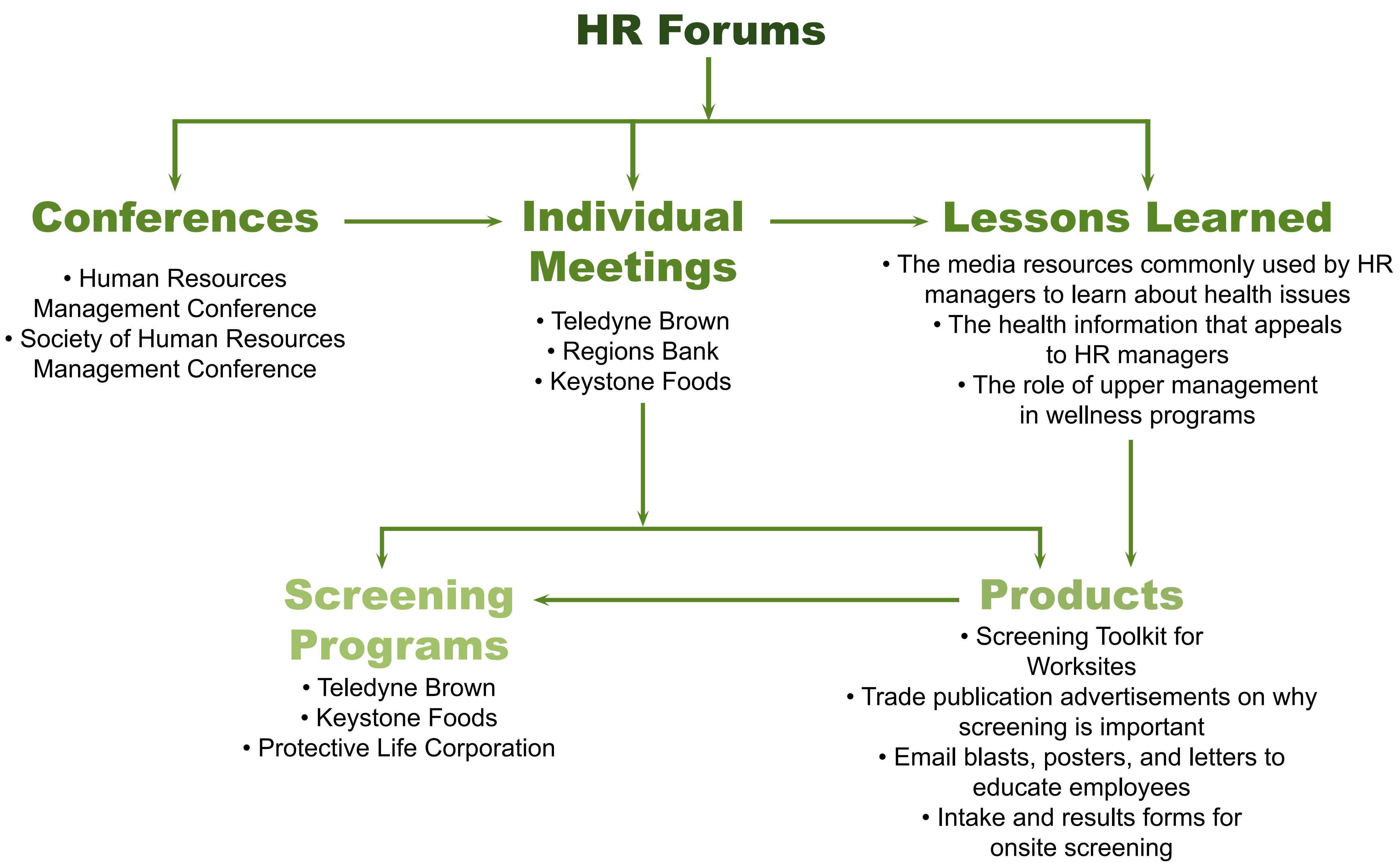
- More sensitive at detecting both CRC and adenomas than fecal occult blood tests (FOBTs), moderately sensitive, highly specific, and a high overall diagnostic accuracy for detecting colorectal cancer ²
- Capable of reaching people who might otherwise not get screened with a colonoscopy by offering options
- Inexpensive and portable; can be read by the on-site medical staff

Goals and Objectives

- To understand the wellness programs and decision processes of large employers
- To learn how to best approach HR directors to discuss CRC
- To assess the feasibility of screening for CRC in the worksite
- To obtain assistance in reaching HR directors who would participate in a focus group or forum
- To learn how to create an effective toolkit

Methods

In order to widen the influence of FITWAY in the business sector, the program was an educational partner with the *Birmingham Business Journal's* annual “Healthiest Employers” event. At the event FITWAY networked with the University of Alabama College of Continuing Studies (UA). From this encounter, we formed a partnership with UA that led to the HR Forums. UA identified organizations to approach for focus groups, engaged extremely large employers to discuss population based screening, and helped FITWAY understand human resource priorities and worksite wellness programs. FITWAY partners ACS and Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama and 14 large employers spanning industry, manufacturing, sales, and government participated in the forums.



Results

Q: What is important to your company as it relates to employee wellness?

- A high level of participation/buy-in from employees
- The reduction of costs and a shift in focus to a healthier, more productive work force
- A culture of health awareness

Q: What criteria do your organization have for a new wellness initiative?

- A personal health questionnaire to determine employees’ actual needs, not perceived needs
- Employee health data
- What can make the most difference with employees

Also

- Emails are the preferred contact method
- Many of the forum participants had onsite screenings in place, sometimes through outside vendors
- Cash incentives and discounts are used to promote wellness and prevention behavior
- While CRC is covered, it was expected to occur through the employees’ primary care physicians; onsite screening is a newer concept

A: “A variety of opportunities is important so you can reach them where they are and offer something that is interesting to them.”

A: “Upper management looks at healthcare cost, lost work time, cost of the initiative and participation rate.”

Make Screening Easier

If your wellness program includes:	Consider:	You will need:
Incentives (or points towards incentives) for reaching health goals	An incentive for employees aged 50 to 75 who have been screened for CRC	A system to track who has completed screening. Some worksites have a form for a physician to complete.
An onsite clinic	Making fecal immunochemical tests (FITs) available in the clinic to eligible employees	To purchase tests from a medical supply distributor and staff to interpret test results or An arrangement with a laboratory company to produce test kits and process results
Annual biometric screening or Flu shots	Offering FITs to employees at their screening or flu shot	
Any level of wellness services	Providing an easy way for employees to schedule CRC screening with Colonoscopy or FIT	Contact information for local primary care physicians and gastroenterologists

“Make Screening Easier” is included in the FITWAY Screening Toolkit for Worksites

Conclusions

Partnering with UA increased the reach and expertise of FITWAY. UA helped us understand the human resource professional and located a group of people who were not only interested in our initiative, but willing to spend a day discussing their companies’ goals for health and wellness. Mass screening through employers is a viable strategy.

Continuing Collaborations

Society of Human Resource Management Annual Meeting Birmingham
UA Human Resource Conference Tuscaloosa
Teledyne Brown Engineering
University of Alabama Huntsville
Protective Life, Inc.
Keystone Foods
Mitchell Cancer Institute - As a FITWAY partner Mitchell is seeking worksite screening in the Mobile area with:
University of South Alabama
Mobile County Health Department
Evonik Industries



¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013, November). Colorectal Cancer Tests Save Lives. Vital Signs.
² Lee, J.K., Liles, E.G., Bent, S., Levin, T.R., Corley, D.A., (2014, Feb. 4). Accuracy of Fecal Immunochemical Tests for Colorectal Cancer. Annals of Internal Medicine, 171-181.