



Photo: Left to right: Jerrica Nadeau, CNA; Dr. Mark Gingerich; Laura Yoder, RN; Jessica Davis, RN; and Kinze Leonard, RN.

## Overcoming Screening Challenges at St. Kateri Clinic

### **Challenge:** Addressing Screening Education and Participation

Our clinic faced significant obstacles in ensuring patients were educated about the importance of screening measures. Despite our focus on prevention, we were not as intentional about screening. Most patients visited us only for acute conditions, often stating, “I am only here for this one thing.” This mindset, coupled with seasonal factors like holidays, cold weather, and teachers preferring summer appointments, led to refusals, and missed opportunities for screenings.

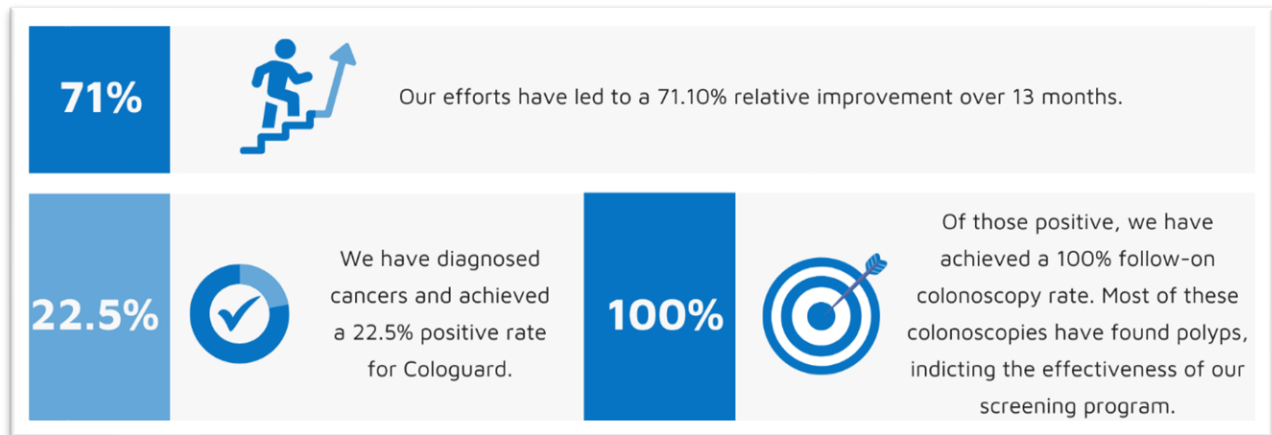
### **Action:** Implementing Strategic Improvements

To address these challenges, we took several steps:

1. **Preplanning Visits:** Every visit is now preplanned. Our staff reviews appointment lists and patient charts to identify those due for screenings and immunizations. This personalized approach ensures that health history and appropriateness for tests are considered, rather than relying solely on data.
2. **In-House Cologuard Drop-Off:** We established a drop-off spot for Cologuard returns, which has received positive feedback from patients.
3. **Provider and Nurse Education:** Educating our staff, with significant contributions from Mike Pelzer, Exact Sciences, has made them more comfortable with the screening process.

4. Standing Orders: These have streamlined preplanning, making the process more efficient.
5. Patient Lists and Care Gaps: Gabby Wilke, Data Quality Analyst, dedicated considerable time to building lists of patients who had not been screened.
6. Dr. Gingerich's Contributions: Dr. Gingerich, who joined St. Kateri in 2023, brought his expertise in colonoscopies from his residency. He completed necessary training under Dr. Gillian Lavik and now performs colonoscopies twice a month, significantly reducing the no-show rate. The availability of free prep on-site and scheduling 30 days out has also improved patient compliance.
7. Care Gap Order: We have sent out 39 Cologuard kits to patients who have never been screened or are due for rescreen.

## Results: Significant Progress and Positive Outcomes



Our efforts have led to a 71.10% relative improvement over 13 months. We have found a 22.5% positive rate for Cologuard and have achieved a 100% follow-on colonoscopy rate. Most of these colonoscopies have found polyps, indicating the effectiveness of our screening program. These patients have been referred to specialists for appropriate follow-up.

Patient attitudes have shifted positively. When friends' complete screenings, others are more likely to follow suit. Once patients have been screened with Cologuard, they find it easy to do again and even request it. This acceptance has grown within the community and will continue with our efforts to ensure that our patients are screened for CRC.

## Sustainability: Ensuring Long-Term Success

Our processes are now ingrained within our daily operations, evolving into the standard practices that define the quality of care that we deliver. As healthcare continues to emphasize prevention and quality measures, our clinic will maintain these practices. SMP Health – St. Kateri is also participating in the Roughrider High Value Network, a clinically integrated network (CIN) and an Accountable Care Organization (ACO) with CVS, which will continue to place emphasis on measuring CRC screening as a quality measure. To ensure long-term success, we must emphasize the importance of early detection and preventive care to our patients, and that

will be done by social media and by the relationship between the provider and the patient. Provider education will continue to be done and the latest guidelines and options for screening will be shared to help increase that engagement. We will continue to provide and do data-driven improvement projects, to identify patients that have gaps in CRC, and will outreach to these patients to complete the screening, and that includes bulk Cologuard orders to those patients who qualify. Overall sustainability is so important when it comes to CRC, and we as a clinic must maintain consistent screening practices and ensure that CRC screening remains a long-term priority.