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GET OFF THE BENCH: HOOPS-THEMED CAMPAIGN URGES COLORECTAL CANCER SCREENING

Basketball great Jamal Mashburn joins Exact Sciences and The Blue Hat Foundation to 'Box Out Colon Cancer.'



[Exact Sciences](#)

Shortly after basketball star Jamal Mashburn entered the NBA in the 1990s, he got some tough news.

“My mom was my best friend and my biggest cheerleader,” Mashburn says. “She taught me to dream on and off the court. Every game, I always thought about her, and every day now, I still try to make her proud.”

To honor his mother, Mashburn is challenging people 45 and older to get screened for colorectal cancer (CRC). His teammates in this effort: The Blue Hat Foundation, a nonprofit dedicated to raising CRC awareness and access in minority and medically underserved communities, and Exact Sciences, the maker of the CRC screening test Cologuard®.

March is Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. It’s also a big month for hoops, with all eyes on the annual NCAA college basketball tournament — longtime fans will remember Mashburn leading his team deep into the bracket in 1993.

Basketball fans also know that the best defense is a good offense. CRC screening advocates know that as well. CRC is the nation’s no. 2 cancer-related killer,¹ and it’s on the rise at alarming rates among younger people.² It’s also treatable in about 90% of those diagnosed when caught in the early stages.^{3,*}

BOX OUT COLON CANCER

The Box Out Colon Cancer campaign will mark college basketball’s biggest moment while raising CRC awareness. In basketball, “boxing out” is a defensive fundamental that involves out-hustling and out-positioning your opponent to keep control of the ball — and the game. In CRC prevention and detection, it means getting screened when you’re 45 or older, as recommended by the American Cancer Society.⁴

Four out of five adults ages 45-49 remain unscreened for CRC.⁵

While everyone age 45 and older could benefit from CRC screenings, the need is particularly critical for the African American population. That group is about 20% more likely to develop — and about 40% more likely to die — from CRC than most other groups.⁶

The Blue Hat Foundation knows this. The nonprofit combines sports enthusiasm and

“We are honored to join Exact Sciences in putting a full-court press on breaking colon cancer screening stigmas, particularly in the Black community,” says Candace Henley, founder of The Blue Hat Foundation. “Together, we can Box Out Colon Cancer, one screening at a time.”

Cologuard is the first FDA-approved, noninvasive, at-home stool-based CRC screening test for average-risk individuals 45 years or older. In the decade since its launch, people have used Cologuard more than 14 million times. Using data from the test’s pivotal clinical study, Exact Sciences estimates that Cologuard may have detected more than half a million instances of precancerous polyps or early-stage CRC.

“At Exact Sciences, we work hard to drive awareness of the importance of timely colorectal cancer screening and to provide an accurate and easy-to-use option for people to screen from home,” says Paul Limburg, Exact Sciences chief medical officer, Screening. “We are thrilled Jamal Mashburn and The Blue Hat Foundation share the same passion for getting people screened, and our hope is to inspire and motivate people ages 45 and up to take action and get screened.”

As Mashburn helps to spread screening awareness on a large scale, his mother is always on his mind.

“I wish we knew how crucial routine screening is before she was diagnosed,” he says. “Being more preventive and checking into your health has the potential to save your life.”

Learn more at BoxOutColonCancer.com.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

* Based on five-year survival.

1. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/colorectal-cancer#:~:text=Key%20facts,people%20aged%2050%20and%20above>

2. American Cancer Society, Cancer Facts & Figures 2024

4. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/colon-rectalcancer/detection-diagnosisstaging/acsrecommendations.html>

5. Siegel RL, Wagle NS, Cercek A, et al. Colorectal cancer statistics, 2023. CA Cancer J Clin. 2023; 73(3): 233-254

6. ACS. Colorectal Cancer Rates Higher in African Americans, Rising in Younger People. Accessed February 27, 2024. Updated September 3, 2020.

<https://www.cancer.org/cancer/latest-news/colorectal-cancer-rates-higher-in-african-americans-rising-in-younger-people.html>

DIVE DEEPER INTO COLORECTAL CANCER



The graphic features the Exact Sciences logo at the top left, followed by "FOCUS Program" in large purple letters. Below it, in smaller text, is "Funding Opportunities for CRC Screening Uptake Strategies". The right side of the graphic has a vertical column of four hexagonal icons: a lightbulb, a handshake, a brain, and a DNA helix.

Exact Sciences Explains:
FOCUS Program

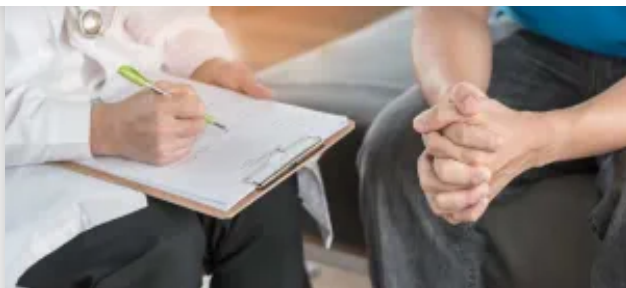
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The graphic shows a group of diverse people of various ages and ethnicities. A blue ribbon, the symbol for colorectal cancer, is prominently displayed in the center. The background is a mix of green and orange stripes.

Don't Let Age Fool You:
Early Onset Colorectal
Cancer is On the Rise

Emily Pinto
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What Comes Next After a Colorectal Cancer Diagnosis?

Jenny Price

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