

**2024 HAP Achievement Award  
Excellence in Care—Large Division**

**Temple Health**

**[ACCESS: Advancing Colorectal Cancer Equity through Systematic Screening](#)**

**The Goal**

In an effort to address the systemic shortcomings in current colorectal cancer (CRC) screening programs, the ACCESS program aimed to lower the barrier to CRC preventative care by partnering with health system colleagues in five high-volume ambulatory specialty care clinics and multiple community settings. The program's ultimate goal was to increase patient access to earlier screening, and therefore earlier diagnosis and improved outcomes.



**Intervention**

The ACCESS program includes CRC screening within community access points already established, specifically churches and hospital-run community health fairs. ACCESS supplements traditional colonoscopy screening with updated methods for CRC prevention, improving equity by expanding access and including patients previously sidelined by Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) or comorbid conditions that require specialist care for colonoscopies. A population-based approach can significantly lessen morbidity and mortality, which is why CRC is one of the few cancers recommended for routine screening.

The need to improve access to cancer care amongst underserved populations is well established; Temple Health's team has developed a novel approach by expanding screening beyond the primary care office.



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### Results

A total of 219 patients were screened, with significantly more patients from the community setting completing the test compared to the in-hospital setting (76.8% vs. 29%,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Patients were also significantly more likely to respond via text messages than phone call with their results (80.0% vs. 19.1%,  $p < 0.05$ ).

Given its ease of use, low cost compared to traditional colonoscopy, and accuracy for detecting CRC, the health system's fecal immunochemical testing (FIT) initiative significantly increased the number of marginalized patients accessing screening and benefiting from early detection for CRC.