



#CheckIt4Andretti

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CheckIt4Andretti, Northeast Digestive rev up colorectal cancer battle with plan to give diagnostic screenings to high-risk, low-income group

Efforts of racing legend's foundation improve chances of early detection, survival

CONCORD, N.C. (March 15, 2022) – John Andretti would have turned 59 March 12, but since his tragic death from colorectal cancer in January 2020, the racing legend's family has been honoring his legacy both on and off the track.

As son Jarett Andretti prepares to compete in the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring Presented by Advance Auto Parts this week, the [CheckIt4Andretti](#) Charitable Foundation is revving up efforts to promote early detection of colorectal cancer, the second-leading cause of cancer deaths in the U.S.

The foundation signed a new partnership Friday with [Northeast Digestive Health Center](#) in Concord that will provide colonoscopies free of charge to select low-income patients from a local free and charitable clinic that serves people who have no health insurance and limited access to health care.

"The potential to save lives through early detection of colorectal cancer is enormous," said Nancy Andretti, founder and president of CheckIt4Andretti. "We are grateful to Northeast Digestive Health Center for helping CheckIt4Andretti fulfill our mission of making these screenings available to those who need but can't afford them."

Nancy Andretti, Jarett's mother and John's wife of 32 years, established the foundation following John's death to promote the importance of early detection and provide free screenings for high-risk, low-income people who are uninsured, underinsured or too young to qualify for insurance coverage.

She forged the partnership with Northeast Digestive Health Center through her relationship with Dr. Vinay Patel, her own gastroenterologist at the center. The foundation is working to secure additional partnerships in North Carolina and Indiana, where Jarett lives and where the family's racing heritage has deep roots.

"CheckIt4Andretti has found the perfect focus for its mission because low-income individuals are much less likely to have access to diagnostic screenings," Patel said. "Northeast Digestive Health Center thanks Nancy Andretti and the foundation for the opportunity to save lives and honor John's legacy at the same time."

March is National Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month. More than 50,000 Americans are expected to die this year from colorectal cancer, which trails only lung cancer as the deadliest form of cancer.

John Andretti won races in open-wheel, sports car and stock car series in a career that spanned 25 years. Andretti didn't receive his first colonoscopy until the age of 52, when his cancer was diagnosed.

Based on new guidance from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, the [American Cancer Society](#) in 2021 lowered its recommended age to begin regular colorectal cancer screenings to 45 years old from 50 previously.

"I hope my father will be remembered for using his own diagnosis to shine a spotlight on the importance of early detection," said Jarett Andretti. "And I hope other providers will follow the compassionate lead of Dr. Patel and his team at Northeast Digestive Health Center to help us expand access to potentially life-saving cancer checks."

CheckIt4Andretti worked with the [North Carolina Association of Free and Charitable Clinics](#) to identify high-risk, low-income patients served by one of the organization's member clinics – the Community Care Clinic of Rowan County in Salisbury – who will be receiving the screening procedure.

“Free and charitable clinics are committed to expanding access to quality health care for the uninsured,” said Randy Jordan, CEO of the North Carolina Association of Free and Charitable Clinics. “We are indebted to partners like CheckIt4Andretti and Northeast Digestive Health Center who help make it happen where the rubber meets the road.”

The association hopes to work with CheckIt4Andretti to find additional health care providers to make more colorectal screenings available to patients of its member clinics across the state, Jordan said.

The association's 73 member clinics deliver a full range of services, including primary and specialty medical care, dental care, behavioral health services, pharmacy service, and hospital referrals to nearly 80,000 uninsured or underinsured people in 88 North Carolina counties, in most cases at no cost to the patient.

About The CheckIt4Andretti Charitable Foundation Inc.

The CheckIt4Andretti Charitable Foundation's mission is to save lives by increasing awareness of the importance of screenings in the prevention and early detection of colorectal cancer, and by providing funding to high risk, low-income patients who are uninsured, underinsured, or too young for insurance to cover the cost of screening. The foundation was established in 2020 in memory of motorsports figure John Andretti, who died of colon cancer Jan. 30, 2020. For more information, please visit www.checkit4andretti.org.

About Northeast Digestive Health Center

Northeast Digestive Health Center, based in Concord, North Carolina, is a leader in the digestive health field, providing a full range of services and procedures to diagnose and treat a variety of digestive conditions. With three office locations and four endoscopy centers and a staff of 11 board-certified gastroenterologists and six physician assistants, Northeast Digestive Health Center offers comprehensive and cost-effective care for individuals with conditions affecting the digestive tract, liver, pancreas and biliary tree. For more information, please visit www.northeastdigestive.com.

About North Carolina Association of Free and Charitable Clinics

The North Carolina Association of Free and Charitable Clinics supports 73 member clinics in expanding access to health care, reducing health disparities and improving the health of uninsured and underinsured individuals. Member clinics are a vital part of North Carolina's safety net, providing care for 80,000 patients in 88 counties, including primary and specialty medical care; dental care; pharmacy services; optometry; behavioral health care; lab tests and hospital referrals. The association supports member clinics with education, advocacy, research, funding and collaboration, and promotes quality health care for all North Carolinians. Learn more at www.ncafcc.org.

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