



# LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY TO IMPROVE COLORECTAL CANCER (CRC) SCREENING RATES

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Streamlining Processes and  
Engaging Clinicians and Patients



## Identifying Patients, Improving Communications, and Automating CRC Screening Workflows

### Executive Summary

Privia Health's commitment to its clinician partners includes supporting patient care and value-based care measures, such as cancer screenings. In 2022, Privia Health implemented a program to improve its CRC screening rates and identified opportunities to enhance communications and reduce clinician burden. In 2023, Privia Health partnered with Amalgam Rx, a clinical decision support (CDS) platform tool, and Exact Sciences to automate aspects of their CRC screening process and offer Cologuard® test kits to eligible patients at their clinician partners' practices. A pilot program in the Texas Gulf Coast market incorporated regular meetings between program leads and clinician care teams to support a unified, proactive approach. Since the program expanded to Georgia, regional CRC screening data specific to Medicare Shared Savings Program (MSSP) patients has demonstrated an increase, most notably from 2023 to 2024. Overall CRC screening rates have risen to 84% in 2024, up from 79% in 2023, surpassing national benchmarks. The program was nationally launched in 2024 and has already led to improved CRC screening rates, optimized technology and workflows, and reduced healthcare costs across Privia Health clinician partners' practices.

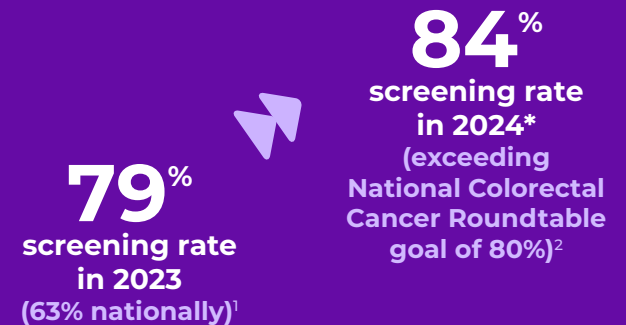
***From a population health standpoint, providing Cologuard tests is really moving the needle in the right way and helping to improve screening rates for colorectal cancer."***

Caitlin Mertz  
Associate Director, Population Health  
Gulf Coast, Privia Health

\*Preliminary assessment in June 2025.

## CRC SCREENING RATES:

MSSP PATIENTS IN TEXAS GULF COAST AND GEORGIA MARKETS



### About Privia Health

Privia Health™ is one of the largest physician enablement companies in the United States with a presence in 15 states and the District of Columbia. Privia builds scaled provider networks with primary-care centric medical groups, risk-bearing entities, a physician-led governance structure, and the Privia Platform comprising an extensive suite of technology and service solutions.

Privia collaborates with medical groups, health plans and health systems to optimize 1,200+ physician practices, improve the patient experience for 5.2+ million patients, and reward 4,800+ physicians and advanced practitioners for delivering high-value care.



## New Collaboration Enables Proactive Approach Based on Clinician and Patient Feedback

As Privia Health monitored its CRC screening efforts throughout 2022, the leadership team gathered feedback from its clinician partners and identified ways to reduce administrative burden. In 2023, Privia Health implemented a CDS platform tool utilizing the data in the electronic health record (EHR) system to automate its CRC screening workflows. Data within the clinician practices' EHR system was used to identify eligible patients and automate patient outreach, test ordering, and results delivery.

### Program Highlights

- **Expanded CRC Screening Access:** Partnered with Exact Sciences to offer the Cologuard® test kit as a first-line screening option for average-risk patients 45+.
- **Automated EHR Integration:** Enables seamless Cologuard test kit ordering, results delivery, and patient tracking within athenaClinicals®.
- **Enhanced Patient Outreach:** Ongoing patient engagement that leverages personalized text messages and emails through CDS platform tool, incorporating feedback from both clinicians and patients.
- **Clinician and Care Team Engagement:** Host pod meetings eight times a year, clinical performance committees, and advisory councils to ensure alignment.
- **Targeted Incentive Programs:** Motivate employed clinicians and care teams through structured performance-based incentives that align with required regulatory limitations on clinician compensation.
- **Continuous Program Optimization:** Use clinician and patient feedback to refine workflows, improve adoption, and minimize disruptions.
- **Scalability and Expansion:** Assessed pilot program results to scale the initiative nationally, incorporating best practices.

***We conduct pod meetings and one-on-one meetings with clinicians and other team members, and this feedback has enabled us to improve both clinician and patient engagement.”***

Evan Varadi  
Vice President of Operations, Gulf Coast  
Privia Health



The Cologuard test is an effective, noninvasive CRC screening test kit that requires no prep for the patient and comes with a descriptive yet simple one-page handout with educational information.<sup>3</sup>

***“It is important to provide a noninvasive option. I talk to many patients who haven't done any CRC screening because they don't want to have a colonoscopy due to fear of the procedure or lack of transportation, and they are more willing to do Cologuard.”***

Dr. Scott Kahney  
Highlands Woods Health  
Privia Medical Group-Gulf Coast



## Utilizing Technology to Identify Patients, Improve Communications, Facilitate Ordering, and Track Results

Prior to 2022, most CRC screening initiatives at Privia Health relied on clinician discussions at the point of care. Once the collaboration with Privia Health, Exact Sciences, and utilization of the CDS platform tool began, an evaluation of existing data and EHR system capabilities was conducted to provide a proactive, automated approach to reach patients who may be due for CRC screening and may not come in for an annual visit.



### Patient Identification

CDS platform tool is used to review athenaClinicals® EHR system data to find patients who may be due for CRC screening.



### Patient Engagement

Patients are notified through email and text indicating the possible need for CRC screening. The notification includes a questionnaire to assess eligibility for the Cologuard® test kit.



### Cologuard Test Ordering

Authorized care manager reviews list of patients who opt in or don't respond and signs the order for the Cologuard test kit to be sent to the patients.



### Follow-up

Follow-up for positive results integrated within the EHR system includes notifications and reminders for clinicians to facilitate appropriate next steps, such as referrals for colonoscopy.

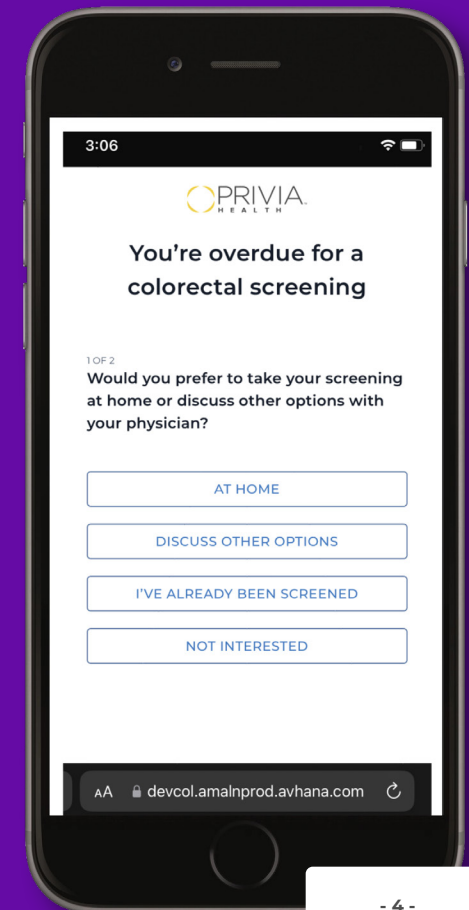


### Screening and Results

Exact Sciences sends Cologuard test kits to patients, including a return mailing label. Patients are informed through the Exact Sciences Patient Navigation Program. Returned test kits are processed and results posted in the patients' charts in the EHR system.

*So if you go back historically, CRC screening was clinician driven. During the patient visit, if we remembered, we would look and see if they were up-to-date on their CRC screening, and if not, we would recommend a screening of some sort, and kind of go from there. We probably didn't remember every time, and many patients didn't come in, so they would get missed."*

Dr. Scott Kahney  
Highlands Woods Health  
Privia Medical Group-Gulf Coast





## A More Detailed View: Utilizing Technology to Identify Patients, Improve Communications, Facilitate Ordering, and Track Results



### Identifying Eligible Patients

The CDS platform tool scans athenaClinicals® EHR data to generate a list of patients who may be due for CRC screening. The Privia Health population health team and partner clinicians review and approve patient lists before outreach begins.



### Engaging Patients Through Automated Communication

Eligible patients receive text messages, emails, or both, educating them about CRC screening and the Cologuard® test kit. A digital questionnaire helps assess their screening eligibility based on prior test history and risk factors. Patients can opt in to receive a test kit, opt out, or choose to discuss options with their clinician.



### Ordering and Processing Test Kits

The CDS platform generates a list of patients who opted in or did not respond. A designated care manager or clinician reviews and approves orders. Orders are processed in batches to balance clinician workload and ensure timely follow-up.



### Automating Bulk Delivery of Tests and Results

Exact Sciences ships Cologuard test kits directly to approved patients. The Exact Sciences Patient Navigation Program notifies patients via email, text message, and/or phone call to confirm receipt and provide instructions for completing the test. Patients are only billed upon return and testing of the kit, ensuring there is no cost to insurers or the patient if the test is received but not returned. Completed test kits are mailed back and processed, with results automatically uploaded to the EHR system and Exact Sciences patient portal. Clinicians receive notifications within the EHR system to review results and take appropriate action.



### Follow-up and Care Coordination for Positive Results

Clinicians notify patients of positive results and document follow-up actions in the EHR system. Standard workflows guide next steps, including referrals for colonoscopy. Ongoing monitoring ensures patients receive necessary follow-up care.



### Monitoring Progress, Improving Results, and Providing Incentives

Clinicians and care teams are incentivized with performance metrics based on their individual practice goals. CRC screening rates are monitored and compared against both national and regional rates. Focus is placed on early and frequent screenings to manage back-end treatment costs.

***“I think the big improvement we saw last year was the automation we implemented between visits.”***

Ryan Graham  
Vice President of Practice  
Operations and Value-Based Care  
Georgia, Privia Health



## Improving Patient Communications With Multifaceted Outreach

The CDS platform tool uses an algorithm that identifies eligible patients who may be due for CRC screening. Once patients are flagged, care teams receive alerts for approval, and outreach is automatically initiated through email, text message, or both, depending on the contact information available.

The collaboration between Exact Sciences and Privia Health, and the integration of the CDS platform, also provides clinicians with effective and flexible communication tools. This has enhanced patient outreach strategy by delivering messaging that is clear, accessible, and better aligned with patient preferences.

Between November 2023 and February 2025, outreach was sent to 42,270 patients in the Texas Gulf Coast and Georgia markets. The initiative combined direct patient engagement with automated standing orders, ensuring patients who did not respond could still receive Cologuard® test kits.

Patient Outreach Results (Nov '23-Feb '25) Texas Gulf Coast and Georgia Markets				
Action Taken	Patients Opting In		Patients Not Responding	
	#	%	#	%
Outreach	4,031	10%	35,716	84%
Follow-up Appointments Scheduled	929	23%	6,817	19%
Screenings Ordered	2,801	69%	23,260*	65%
Results Placed in Charts	1,315	47%	4,213	18%

\*Test kits were ordered for non-responders through standing orders and batch automation.

**Note:** An additional 3,200 patients were deemed ineligible or opted out of CRC outreach and are not included in this table.

### Key Insights:

- ✓ 47% of patients who opted in and received a kit completed testing
- ✓ 65% of non-responders received test kits via automation
- ✓ 18% of non-responders who received a kit still completed testing
- ✓ 10% tested positive—over 550 early detections
- ✓ Outreach reached 42K+ patients with minimal staff lift
- ✓ EHR-integrated workflows enabled fast, scalable action

***It's surprising to note 18% of patients who did not respond to any text or email messages, but received a kit, still followed through with completing their test. This supports the need for messaging about how CRC screening and early detection saves lives at the point of care."***

Evan Varadi  
Vice President of Operations, Gulf Coast  
Privia Health



## Key Steps to Success



### Technological Integration

Privia Health leverages the athenaClinical<sup>®</sup> EHR system and a CDS platform tool to identify patients who may be due for CRC screening. Automated outreach via email and text messaging ensures timely communication, while real-time EHR data provides clinicians with up-to-date screening status. Integrated EHR alerts and reminders help facilitate screening discussions during patient visits, ensuring no opportunities are missed.



### Clinician Adoption and Engagement

Initially, some clinicians hesitated to adopt the program, given the traditional reliance on colonoscopy as the primary CRC screening method. However, strong support from clinician leaders and the National Physician Advisory Council helped drive acceptance, emphasizing the importance of CRC screening and recognizing the Cologuard<sup>®</sup> test kit as a viable alternative for average-risk patients hesitant to undergo a colonoscopy. Demonstrated improvements in screening rates and workflow efficiencies further encouraged adoption.



### Patient Outreach and Education

By using automated, personalized messaging, Privia Health proactively engages patients in CRC screening. Outreach efforts emphasize the importance of early detection while providing education on noninvasive screening options like the Cologuard test kit. Patients have the flexibility to opt in, opt out, or consult their clinician before receiving a test kit.



### Streamlined Test Ordering and Follow-up

To minimize administrative burden, test orders are grouped in daily batches of 20 per clinician to balance workload. Exact Sciences automatically mails test kits and completed test results are seamlessly uploaded to the EHR system. Clinicians receive automated alerts for positive results, ensuring timely follow-up and colonoscopy referrals.



### Optimized Communication and Message Management

To prevent message fatigue, outreach is structured in phased blocks, allowing clinics to manage patient engagement effectively. Privia Health also implemented on-demand message controls, enabling practices to adjust messaging volume as needed.



### Staff Training and Continuous Improvement

To ensure successful implantation, clinicians, front-office staff, and nursing teams receive standardized training, including scripted messaging for consistent patient communication. Regular feedback loops with clinicians helped refine workflows and drive continuous improvements.



### Ongoing Collaboration

Collaboration between Privia Health, Amalgam Rx, and Exact Sciences continues to be a key factor in the success of the CRC screening program. This three-way collaboration helps enable the identification of eligible patients, improves patient engagement, and facilitates the ordering and tracking of screening tests. As a result, CRC screening rates have increased significantly, surpassing national benchmarks and demonstrating the effectiveness of a unified, proactive approach to patient care.

***We engage all our clinical leaders in many ways, including training them in leadership skills, specifically about how to interact with people to engage them differently. This is part of our clinical leadership development program. We recently graduated our 72nd clinician from this program.”***

Dr. Keith Fernandez  
Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer  
Privia Health

***The biggest piece of feedback from our clinicians was about what we could help take off their plate. This program enabled us to place 16,000 orders in the course of a day or two. So efficient.”***

Ryan Graham  
Vice President of Practice Operations and Value-Based Care  
Georgia, Privia Health



## Looking Ahead: Measuring Impact and Improving Performance

The Texas Gulf Coast and Georgia markets have led the way to improve CRC screening rates, and Privia Health plans to build on these successes throughout the rest of their markets. Privia Health is focused on refining the impact of this program and addressing challenges through ongoing improvements. Clinicians are educated on proper documentation to ensure accurate tracking and minimizing their administrative burden. The program monitors individual practices' metrics and feedback regarding patient responses. This helps ensure that each clinician receives adequate support without becoming overwhelmed by CRC screening goals, and that incentive structures effectively motivate teams. The program continues to demonstrate a shared commitment to improving patient care by increasing CRC screening rates.

Each of these markets took distinct, thoughtfully tailored approaches to launching the CRC screening program. The Texas Gulf Coast team embraced a phased roll-out, leveraging real-time feedback to refine processes, minimize disruption, and support team adaptation. In contrast, Georgia pursued a comprehensive, all-at-once implementation—accelerating adoption, streamlining workflows, and swiftly enhancing patient care. While each path posed its own challenges, both proved successful by aligning with the unique operational rhythms and cultural nuances of their respective markets—underscoring that the most effective strategy is the one that best serves the people it is designed for.

Privia Health is evaluating how to apply the insights from its CRC screening program to other preventive care initiatives, aiming for a scalable and data-driven approach to patient engagement. The organization remains committed to innovation, collaboration, and quality improvement in population health management.

***“Even if a practice is above the average, let’s say they are at 85%, there’s still 15% who need to be screened for cancer. Those 15% matter just as much as the 85%.”***

Dr. Keith Fernandez  
Executive Vice President and Chief Clinical Officer  
Privia Health

## THE RESULTS\*

# 84%

screening rate in 2024  
(6% increase from 2023)

**For MSSP patients in  
Texas Gulf Coast and  
Georgia Markets**

***“This is bigger than a quality measure and closing it. We identified 120 people who had positive results, and they never would have known it had the program not happened.”***

Gwen Wyles  
Associate Vice President,  
Population Health  
Georgia, Privia Health



## Important Risk Information

The Cologuard® test is intended for the qualitative detection of colorectal neoplasia associated DNA markers and for the presence of occult hemoglobin in human stool. A positive result may indicate the presence of colorectal cancer (CRC) or advanced adenoma (AA) and should be followed by a colonoscopy.

The Cologuard test is indicated to screen adults of either sex, 45 years or older, who are at typical average risk for CRC. A Cologuard test is not a replacement for diagnostic colonoscopy or surveillance colonoscopy in high-risk individuals. The Cologuard test is not for high-risk individuals, including patients with a personal history of colorectal cancer and adenomas; have had a positive result from another colorectal cancer screening method within the last 6 months; have been diagnosed with a condition associated with high risk for colorectal cancer such as IBD, chronic ulcerative colitis, Crohn's disease; or have a family history of colorectal cancer, or certain hereditary syndromes.

Positive Cologuard test results should be referred to a colonoscopy. A negative Cologuard test result does not guarantee absence of cancer or advanced adenoma. Following a negative result, patients should continue participating in a screening program at an interval and with a method appropriate for the individual patient.

False positives and false negatives do occur. In a clinical study, 13% of patients without colorectal cancer or advanced adenomas received a positive result (false positive) and 8% of patients with cancer received a negative result (false negative). The clinical validation study was conducted in patients 50 years of age and older. Cologuard test performance in patients ages 45 to 49 years was estimated by sub-group analysis of near age groups.

Cologuard test performance when used for repeat testing has not been evaluated or established. Rx only.

This case study is for educational and informational purposes only and should not be interpreted as an endorsement by Exact Sciences Corporation of any featured health system, individual, service, or product. This case study reflects the individual health system's experience, interpretation, "best practice," and opinions and does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Exact Sciences or its employees.

**References:** **1.** United States Cancer Statistics: Data Visualizations. Colorectal Cancer Screening. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Published June 2024. Accessed June 12, 2025. <https://gis.cdc.gov/Cancer/USCS/#/CancerScreening/> **2.** National Colorectal Cancer Roundtable. Achieving 80% colorectal cancer screening rates in every community. Accessed June 12, 2025. <https://nccrt.org/our-impact/80-in-every-community/> **3.** Cologuard® Clinician Brochure. Madison, WI: Exact Sciences Corporation.

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