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Men's reluctance to see doctors can have consequences, officials say

Men are much less likely than women to see their doctor once they reach adulthood, and while that's not a new development, it's something continuing to affect men's health, officials say.

While the two genders were virtually equal in 2017 community health center visits as non-adults — 107,547 boys and 108,281 girls — 53 percent more women than men aged 18-64 saw doctors in the same year (278,785 women and 181,784 men), federal data shows.

Community Health Centers of Greater Dayton and Molina Healthcare, which manages privatized Medicaid plans, are working to improve how many men in the area have a regular provider.

The two will hold a Men's Health Fair and Turkey Giveaway on Nov. 17 at Mt. Enon Church in Dayton with the goal of giving out health information, providing screenings and meeting with men who need to connect with a regular doctor. Attendees can receive a free turkey after visiting booths at the fair.

Gregory Hopkins, executive director for Community Health Centers of Greater Dayton, said he understands men can feel sense of invincibility and put off going to the doctor.

Hopkins said men across all income levels have lower life expectancies than women and the two leading causes of death are heart disease and cancer, which a doctor could help prevent or treat

with early detection.

Cleveland Clinic found that only three in five men get an annual physical, [according to a 2016 survey](#) of about 500 men ages 18 to 70 across the U.S.

Sixty-one percent said they go to their doctor when a symptom or problem becomes unbearable, while 42 percent go to the doctor when they fear they have a serious medical condition. About 7 percent said they never go to the doctor.

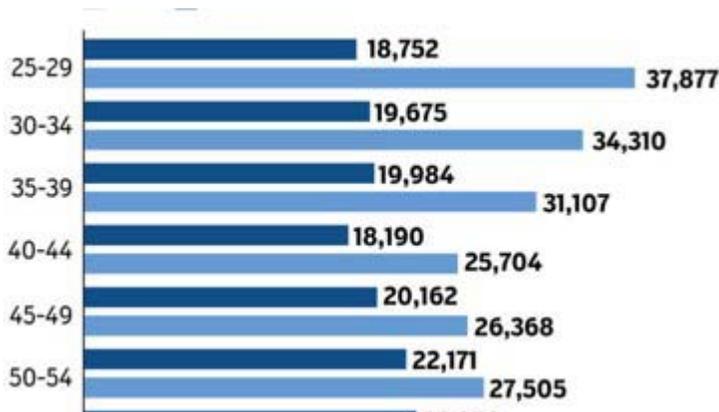


Photo: Staff Writer

About 19 percent of men studied said they go to their doctor so their significant other or loved one would stop asking them to do so.

Men across age groups don't know the right age to be screened for different health conditions like colon cancer, blood pressure or prostate cancer, the study also found.

Most men studied said they are reluctant to discuss their health. The health topic men were most likely to be comfortable talking about were sports injuries or other injuries.

Community Health Centers officials emphasized the importance of having regular doctors appointments and an ongoing relationship with a provider instead of periodically getting treatment at an urgent care or ER only when there is major issue.

Shanise Wade, outreach and enrollment coordinator, said that emergency room caregivers can only treat what they know in the moment. A primary care provider, however, can know what is normal for the patient and is more able to pick up on subtle differences in health.

"When you go to a family doctor, they can go back to your last visit or family history," Wade said.

The patient also benefits from building a relationship with a regular provider.

“When that relationship is there, they know you better and you have that comfort level to share information and ask questions,” Hopkins said.

Men’s Health Fair

When: 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. Nov. 17

Where: Mt. Enon Church, 1501 W. Third St., Dayton

What to expect: Health information, health screenings and raffle prizes as well as a turkey giveaway to men who participate in the event. Panelists will speak from 2 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. including Dr. Sterling Thompson, Community Health Centers of Greater Dayton; Dr. Victor McCarley, psychologist with Community Health Centers of Greater Dayton; Gilbert Ghand, Public Health Dayton & Montgomery County; and Bruce Barcelo, also with Public Health.

Source: Molina Healthcare, Community Health Centers of Greater Dayton