

Many Latinos Skip Wellness Checkups

About 60% of Americans said they avoid recommended health screenings, up 20% since last year.

August 9, 2024 By Laura Schmidt

Most Americans do not prioritize preventive care, routine wellness checkups and more, according to the [second annual Wellness Matters survey by Aflac](#), a supplemental health insurance provider.

[About 60% of Americans reported](#) avoiding recommended health screenings, a 20% increase since 2023.

Systemic health inequities, lack of insurance, cost of care, cultural barriers and immigration status are some reasons Latinos may avoid scheduling [doctor](#) visits, which can lead to the development of long-term medical conditions.

About 42% of Latino respondents indicated language as a barrier to [preventive care](#) and understanding their insurance coverage. Language barriers can also contribute to dangerous misdiagnoses, mistreatment or incorrect medication prescriptions.

What's more, about 29% of Latino men reported being more likely to skip wellness appointments because they feel healthy or believe they do not need health checkups at their age.

The survey underscores the importance of regular screenings in early detection. For example, about 56% of respondents said they were diagnosed with cancer as a result of a regularly scheduled [cancer screening](#) or [routine exam](#). About 40% of Latinos were diagnosed with cancer following a regularly scheduled cancer screening compared with 24% of Black Americans.

In addition to diagnosing cancer, regular screenings can help detect chronic diseases and so-called silent killers, such as [high blood pressure](#), which is more common in Latino and Black adults.

The survey also found that more than half of Americans report a family history of chronic disease,

yet more than half admit to skipping important health and cancer screenings.

“Family history matters to preventive care because history and genetics can often help inform the future of our own health,” said Aflac senior vice president and chief actuary Thomas Morey in the news release.

Additionally, the survey highlights the importance of racial diversity in the health care field. In fact, about 50% of Latino and 59% of Black Americans said they were more likely to seek preventive care from providers with similar backgrounds.

Although Latinos account for almost 18% of the U.S. population, they accounted for only 6.3% of U.S. physicians. Latinas, specifically, made up a mere 2.4%. Similarly, Black physicians represented only about 6% of U.S. physicians in 2022, although Black Americans represent 13% of the population.

To improve health outcomes and reduce health disparities among people of color, experts recommend boosting diversity among doctors.

“The Wellness Matters survey reinforces the value of proactive health habits,” Morey said. “It also reminds us how much preventive care matters and to take more ownership of our health, regardless of age, gender or ethnicity.”

To read more, click [#Preventive Care](#) or [#Routine Screening](#). There, you’ll find headlines such as “[Start Breast Cancer Screening at Age 40?](#),” “[Report Details Latino Health Status in Georgia](#)” and “[Many Men, Particularly Latinos, Avoid Routine Medical Care](#).”