NEWS BRIEF

Pandemic Disrupted 30% of Health Care Visits for Patients Aged 50 and Older

Approximately 1 in 3 Americans aged 50 and older canceled health appointments during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, according to a recent study from Michigan Medicine's National Poll on Healthy Aging.

Canceled appointments included those for both medical and dental reasons, such as blood tests or teeth cleanings. As of January 2022, most Americans aged 50 and older had rescheduled their canceled health visits.

However, an alarming number of Americans from this demographic have not yet rescheduled appointments or do not intend to at all:

- Approximately 37% for dental procedures

- Approximately 26% for health tests and procedures

- Approximately 22% for doctor visits

While COVID-19 understandably kept many people out of doctors' offices initially, the continued postponement of care suggests the pandemic will continue to influence health care decisions in 2022.

In fact, the pandemic already seems to be playing a significant role as individuals choose not to reschedule health appointments. According to the National Poll report, rescheduling was much more likely among vaccinated individuals.

What's Next?

Delayed health care appointments can lead to serious consequences later in life. Even simple or routine procedures, such as teeth cleaning, can reveal health issues that may otherwise go unnoticed until they worsen. And, ultimately, worsened health conditions can become chronic and extremely costly to manage.

While the National Poll report is specific to Americans aged 50 and older, its findings touch on a universal issue: It can be easy to postpone health care appointments and forget to reschedule them.

That's why employers should continue to encourage employees to seek preventive health care and keep their appointments. Doing so can help individuals maintain quality health for years to come.

SHOPBENEFITS