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OHIC NEWS

The Rhode Island Office of the Health Insurance Commissioner

PRIMARY CARE

IMPORTANCE OF FINDING A PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER (PCP)

Looking for New Year's resolution ideas? This year, make your health a priority. The first step is finding the best primary care physician (PCP) for you. This month we are highlighting the critical role primary care plays in maintaining your health and preventing disease. The health care system can be difficult to navigate. Your primary care physician is your go-to expert for figuring out that system, and maintaining your health. PCPs help you prevent diseases, connect you to specialists, and advocate on your behalf. Routine visits with your primary care doctor will keep you healthier. No matter how old you are or how healthy you are today, preventive care is vital to catching potential health problems earlier when they are easier to treat. If you are looking to improve your health and wellness in 2023, it is essential to find a health care professional that knows you better than any other doctor. PCPs know your medical history and health goals, making them the most likely to catch when something is wrong.

PREVENTIVE CARE INCREASES YOUR LIFESPAN

Preventive care can drastically improve your lifespan by catching and treating problems early. Routine visits with your PCP will catch early signs of chronic diseases like cancer and diabetes. PCPs treat patients on a holistic level, they know your medical history and your future health goals. While you may not be experiencing any symptoms, your PCP will know exactly what to look for, and will conduct screenings and tests to ensure you are healthy. If you do have a chronic disease, your PCP will work with you on all of the steps and lifestyle changes you need to make.

PRIMARY CARE CAN SAVE YOU MONEY

Preventive care not only leads to better health outcomes for you and your family, but it can also save you money by catching health problems early and avoiding more costly care later on. Adults with PCPs are more likely to receive quality, high-value care, and can often have their needs met without having to see a specialist. Moreover, many preventive care services are completely covered by insurance. Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3jlUJFB>





HOW TO CHOOSE A PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER

Primary care is personalized care. It is important to find a provider that you trust, and feel comfortable with so that they can better assist you and help you better meet all of your health goals. Below are some tips that might help you find the best primary care provider for you.

Assess your needs and decide which type of primary care specialty fits you. Primary care specialties include family practice physicians, general practitioners, nurse practitioners, internal medicine physicians, and more.

Compile a shortlist of providers that can meet your needs. It is important to ensure that all of the PCPs you are considering are listed within your insurance network - this will help reduce your out of pocket costs.

Before moving forward, make sure the PCP's office hours and location is compatible and convenient for you and your schedule. If you prefer evening or weekend appointments call ahead to see if the provider is available during those times.

Ensure that this provider is equipped to accommodate any of your individual health care needs. If you are interested in telemedicine appointments or online services make sure your potential provider provides these services.

Ask your friends and family for recommendations. The people in your life that you trust, including family, colleagues, and other health care professionals may have helpful information about local providers.

Calling the office and setting up an initial visit is usually the last step. A face-to-face meeting is the best way to see if this is the right fit for you or your family.

INVESTING IN PRIMARY CARE HELPS ENSURE COST SAVINGS AND HIGH-QUALITY CARE

OHIC understands that primary care is critically important not only for the health and savings it promotes on a consumer level, but also on a systemic level across the state. Primary care can improve health outcomes, lower health care spending, and improve health equity; underinvestment in primary care can have detrimental consequences on the system's ability to provide the personal care patients need. Leading the way in Rhode Island health care reform and serving as a model for other states, our office established a comprehensive set of Affordability Standards to lower costs and improve quality. One of the major goals of these standards is to improve primary care within the state by requiring insurers to invest more in primary care providers and services and encouraging primary care practices to transform into Patient Centered Medical Homes (PCMHs). To learn more about the Affordability Standards and PCMS, view our website: [here](#).