




Delayed healthcare in Illinois:

It's time to talk to your doctor about your health

 **Delays in screening, diagnosis and treatment for diseases like cancer, heart disease, and diabetes could result in thousands of preventable deaths.**

Fear of contracting COVID-19 has caused people across the U.S. - including in Illinois - to delay necessary healthcare from routine appointments to important elective surgeries and emergency room visits.^{12,3} In fact according to a survey conducted in July 2020, 68% of Americans said they or someone in their household had deferred care due to the pandemic,⁴ and many have experienced negative health consequences as a result.⁵ Of particular concern, research suggests that delays in screening, diagnosis and treatment for diseases like cancer, heart disease, and diabetes have resulted in thousands of excess deaths.^{6,7,8} In addition to the human toll, the long-term financial costs of untreated or late detection of serious diseases could be substantial for patients, the healthcare system⁹ and potentially state and local governments.

The rate of deferred care appears to be even higher for Black and Hispanic adults

There is increasing evidence that COVID-19 is disproportionately affecting communities of color.¹⁰ What's more, research shows that people of color are more likely to put off their own care than other groups.¹¹ In a survey conducted by the Society for Cardiovascular Angiography and Interventions (SCAI), when respondents identifying as Black or Hispanic were asked about their willingness to visit a doctor, only about 1 in 4 people said they were comfortable scheduling a medical procedure, compared to almost half of the general population.¹² In a separate study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), avoidance of urgent or emergency care was more prevalent among Black and Hispanic adults.¹³

Communities of color in Illinois are particularly vulnerable

COVID-19 has only worsened the historical health inequities in Illinois, and particularly in communities of color. In Chicago, for example, where almost two-thirds of residents are Black or Hispanic,¹⁴ these Chicagoans are significantly more likely to die from cancer, heart disease and diabetes than their white counterparts.¹⁵ We know that putting off needed care can lead to negative health outcomes. In fact, almost 1 in 3 U.S. adults with chronic conditions reported that going without or delaying care worsened their health condition,¹⁶ meaning the negative impacts of deferred care could be even worse among these communities in Chicago.



Black and Hispanic Chicagoans are significantly more likely to die from cancer, heart disease and diabetes than their white counterparts.



Almost 1 in 3 U.S. adults with chronic conditions reported that going without or delaying their own care worsened their health condition.

How to prioritize your health

Tools, resources and communication between patients and healthcare professionals is key to reversing this trend, including knowing what steps hospitals, doctor's offices and clinics are taking to help keep patients safe, how to talk to your doctor about care during COVID, and resources to find and use healthcare during these challenging times. The Johnson & Johnson Medical Devices Companies launched My Health Can't Wait Illinois, an educational effort and resource hub designed to help Illinois patients pursue care with confidence and provide key resources to improve communication between patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals about how and when to prioritize their health.

Visit MyHealthCantWait.com/Illinois to learn more.



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