



Pennsylvania  
Insurance Department



Pennsylvania  
Department of Health

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## **Shapiro Administration Reminds Pennsylvanians to Get Screened for Colorectal Cancer During Colorectal Cancer Awareness Month**

*The Affordable Care Act requires preventive services, including colorectal cancer screenings, to be available at no cost to Pennsylvanians*

**Harrisburg, PA** – Today, the **Pennsylvania Insurance Department (PID)** and the **Department of Health (DOH)** encouraged Pennsylvanians to get screened early for colorectal cancer – the second leading cause of cancer deaths in the United States – and take advantage of the free preventive services available through their comprehensive health insurance as mandated by the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

“Colorectal cancer is on the rise in young adults, which is why we’re encouraging all age-appropriate Pennsylvanians to utilize the free preventive health services – like screening for colon cancer - available through their health insurance,” said **Pennsylvania Insurance Commissioner Michael Humphreys**. “Ensuring you’re up to date on your screenings and check-ups can play a major role in supporting your overall health and can also help detect illnesses before they progress in severity.”

In response to rising cases of colorectal cancer in younger adults, health experts now recommend colon cancer screenings to begin at age 45, instead of age 50. Common warning signs of colorectal cancer can include persistent changes in bowel habits, blood in stool, abdominal discomfort, unexplained weight loss, and fatigue. However, many people experience no symptoms in early stages, making routine preventive screenings essential.

Under the ACA, most health insurers must cover preventive services at no cost, meaning no deductible, copayment or coinsurance. For younger adults with a family history of colorectal cancer, ACA requires health plans to cover earlier, medically recommended screenings at no cost. These preventive services include screenings for:

- Colorectal cancer;
- Lung cancer;
- HIV;
- Blood pressure and cholesterol; and
- Cervical cancer.

"Colorectal cancer screening is the essential first step to prevention and early detection. With the rising colorectal cancer rates in younger adults, we now recommend screening at age 45," said **Dr. Robert Bonacci, Special Advisor to the Pennsylvania Secretary of Health**. "People with a family history of colorectal cancer, or a personal history of polyps, colorectal cancer, inflammatory bowel disease, abdominal radiation, or certain genetic conditions may need to begin screening earlier, or be screened more frequently. If you are experiencing ongoing or unusual symptoms, I encourage you to talk to your health care provider."

State Rep. Jordan A. Harris, majority chair of the House Appropriations Committee, is a strong advocate for colorectal cancer awareness, and echoed both departments' recommendations and encouraged routine health screenings.

"Colorectal cancer is one of the most preventable cancers when it is detected early, yet far too many families still feel the devastating impact of this disease," said **Rep. Harris, D-Philadelphia**. "Having lost my wife, Tiffany, to colorectal cancer, I know how devastating this disease can be for families. Even more concerning is that we are now seeing this disease affect younger people at increasing rates. That is why raising awareness, encouraging routine screenings, and ensuring Pennsylvanians have access to lifesaving preventive care must remain a priority so more people can catch this disease early and improve their chances of survival."

Pennsylvanians with questions about their insurance or who wish to file a complaint can visit [pa.gov/consumer](https://pa.gov/consumer) or call 1-866-PA-COMPLAINT (1-866-722-6675).

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