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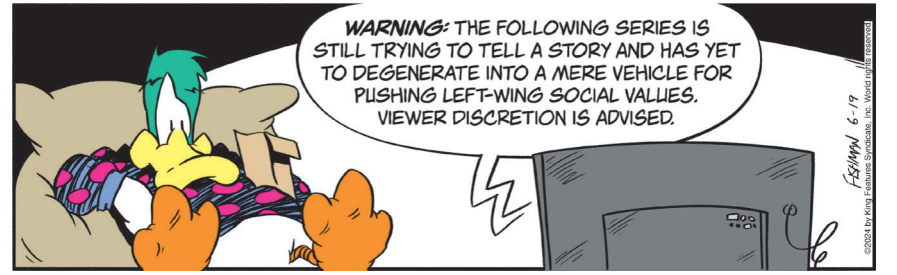
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By Loren Fishman



SUNDAY, LOCAL COMMENTARY | MONDAY, TUESDAY, THURSDAY & FRIDAY, POLITICAL OPINION | WEDNESDAY, HEALTH & WELLNESS ADVICE | SATURDAY, POSITIVE LIVING

A VIEW FROM THE VILLAGES HEALTH

When was your last preventive visit? What topics did your Primary Care Physician (PCP) cover? Did you realize the indispensable role these visits play in safeguarding your health and thwarting diseases?



Dr. Rosa Carvalho

COMMENTARY

Preventive visits serve as crucial checkpoints for PCPs to assess risk factors, conduct disease screenings, and offer personalized, evidence-based recommendations for prevention.

By fostering a strong rapport with their PCPs and adhering to recommended follow-up protocols, individuals can take proactive ownership of their healthcare journey, thereby optimizing their overall well-being. Disease prevention lies at the heart of public health initiatives, striving to curtail the incidence and prevalence of illnesses within communities. Let's delve into the five pivotal types of disease prevention methodologies.

Primordial Prevention: Spearheads risk factor mitigation across entire populations by targeting social and environmental conditions. Often implemented through legislative measures and national policies, these initiatives tackle the fundamental social determinants that pave the way for disease emergence. For instance, enhancing urban neighborhoods with safe sidewalks promotes physical activity, thereby curbing risk factors associated with obesity and cardiovascular ailments.

Primary Prevention: Concentrates on forestalling disease onset by promoting healthy lifestyles, encompassing regular exercise, balanced nutrition, and abstinence from harmful substances such as tobacco and excessive alcohol. Furthermore, immunizations against infectious diseases like Pneumonia, Influenza, and Herpes zoster fall under this category, bolstering our defenses against preventable ailments.

Secondary Prevention: Revolves around early detection and intervention to impede disease progression. Screening methodologies like mammograms for breast cancer, colonoscopies

for colorectal cancer, and blood pressure assessments for hypertension exemplify this proactive approach, facilitating early disease identification when treatment efficacy is optimal.

Tertiary Prevention: Strives to enhance the quality of life for those grappling with chronic illnesses while staving off complications. This encompasses medication adherence, lifestyle modifications, and participation in rehabilitation initiatives. For instance, diabetic patients undergo routine foot examinations to preempt ulcers and amputations, while pulmonary rehabilitation programs aid in chronic obstructive pulmonary disease recovery.

Quaternary Prevention: Underscores the imperative of sidestepping unnecessary medical interventions and mitigating the perils of over-medicalization. By fostering shared decision-making between patients and healthcare providers and advocating for judicious utilization of medical resources, we can avert unnecessary harm. For example, judicious antibiotic prescribing helps combat antibiotic resistance, while prudent opioid painkiller usage mitigates the risk of addiction and overdose.

In the United States, preventive medicine is governed by various entities spanning federal, state, and local jurisdictions. Bodies like the United States Preventive Services Task Force, the Advisory Committee on Immunizations Practices via the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and specialty organizations like the American College of Preventive Medicine and the American Cancer Society play pivotal roles in shaping preventive healthcare recommendations. However, staying abreast of evolving guidelines poses a perennial challenge for healthcare practitioners.

In essence, disease prevention encompasses a multifaceted array of strategies and interventions aimed at alleviating the burden of illness and nurturing health and well-being. By embracing healthy habits, undergoing routine screenings, adhering to prescribed treatments, championing policy reforms, and actively engaging with healthcare providers, individuals and communities can forge a collective path towards disease prevention and enhanced health outcomes.

At The Villages Health, our commitment extends beyond conventional healthcare

delivery. We pride ourselves on offering a diverse array of educational programs tailored to both members and non-members alike. From indispensable courses on hearing and brain health, fall assessments, pre-diabetes and diabetes prevention to enriching activities like Tai Chi for balance and memory screenings, we are steadfast in empowering our community with knowledge and resources for healthier living. In 2023, our unwavering dedication manifested as we welcomed 44,810 participants and facilitated a total of 1,482 classes.

Moreover, our dedication transcends education to encompass proactive healthcare. In 2023 over 95% of our patients benefited from annual preventive visits, underscoring our unwavering commitment to promptly addressing health concerns and conducting comprehensive screenings. At The Villages Health, we are resolutely devoted to providing unparalleled service and aiding you in achieving optimal health and swift recovery.

For further information on The Villages Health's primary care services, call 352-604-5868. Dr. Rosa Carvalho is a primary care physician at The Villages Health.

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