Health Care Access

Colorectal cancer diagnosis and screening

Colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer deaths among Oregonians. Colorectal cancer can be prevented through screening tests where precancerous polyps can be identified and removed. Screening can also detect cancers earlier when they are more easily treated.

In Oregon, there has been a steady decline in late stage colorectal cancer diagnoses over the past 15 years. This is likely due to the steady increase in colorectal cancer screening that occurred over this same time period.

FIGURE 1
Late stage colorectal cancer diagnosis among age 50 years or older, Oregon, 1996–2011

Source: Oregon State Cancer Registry (OSCaR)
In 2012, 63.6% of adults aged 50–75 years had received the recommended screening (64.5% of men and 62.8% of women).

For the downward trend in late stage diagnoses to continue, Oregon’s screening rates must improve. At 63.6%, the proportion of Oregon older adults who are adequately screened is far below what should be expected given the efficacy of the screening.

**Additional Resources:** The Cancer You Can Prevent, Cancer in Oregon, 2010, Chronic disease epidemiology, Screening for Colorectal Cancer

**About the Data:** The data source for cancer diagnoses is the Oregon State Cancer Registry (OSCaR). Late stage colorectal cancer diagnosis is defined as having spread to the lymph nodes, or with distant metastases. Rates are age-adjusted to the 2000
U.S. standard population (19 age groups - Census P25-1130). Population estimates used in calculating rates are from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS).

Data source for screening rates is the Oregon Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). BRFSS is a telephone survey conducted annually among non-institutionalized adults age 18+. Since 2010, the BRFSS data have included cell phone respondents as well as those reached by landline, and data weighting methods have changed. Therefore, caution should be used in interpreting changes over time.

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