Cardiovascular Health of Younger Adults Focus of 2018 American Heart Month

Personal responsibility, lifestyle changes are keys to getting heart health on track

ROSEBURG, Ore., February 13, 2018 – February is American Heart Month, which is the perfect time to remind people to take control of their heart health.

Recent trends across the United States show heart disease death rates are declining more slowly than they have in years past, particularly among younger adults ages 35 to 64. In many communities across the country, death rates are actually increasing among adults in this age group, whose heart disease risk factors – physical inactivity, tobacco use and hypertension – are also increasing.

As recently as 2015, the Oregon Health Authority reported that heart disease was the second-leading cause of death in Oregon, behind only cancer. A 2017 study by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation identified a high prevalence of risk factors, including physical inactivity, tobacco use, obesity and excessive drinking – all of them known to be tied to heart disease – as contributing factors to Douglas County ranking 31 out of 36 Oregon counties for health outcomes.

Dr. Douglas Carr, medical director at Umpqua Health, says the adage is true: an ounce of prevention really is worth a pound of cure.

"It's important for people to understand there is plenty within their own power that they can do to avoid chronic illness like heart disease, rather than ignoring the issue and relying on medical or pharmaceutical interventions to fix the problem," he says.

Regular exercise, healthy eating, avoiding tobacco products and excessive drinking, monitoring blood pressure, and visiting your primary care provider on an annual basis are all easy and effective ways to fight heart disease, Carr says.

"At the end of the day, it's best to give up the bad habits that hurt your heart health rather than having your heart give up on you," he says.

Umpqua Health operates two clinics in the Harvard Medical Park and accepts most commercial insurances and the Oregon Health Plan. To make an appointment, call (541) 229-7038.

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About Umpqua Health
Umpqua Health is the parent company of Umpqua Health Alliance, one of 15 Oregon coordinated care organizations serving the Oregon Health Plan. The Roseburg-based company and its subsidiaries are focused on expanding access, improving care, and reducing unnecessary costs across the clinical space for more than 26,000 Douglas County residents on the Oregon Health Plan and close to 7,000 more individuals with Medicare and private insurance.

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