Veterans' Health in South Carolina

Introduction to the Veteran Population

In 2012, two studies came out stating that male and female veterans and active duty military across the US report poorer health and unhealthier lifestyles than civilians\(^1,2\).

There are approximately 20 million adult veterans living in the US\(^1\). Over 400,000 of them live in South Carolina (SC)\(^3\), which represents 10% of the adult population in the state\(^4\). In SC, veterans are primarily non-Hispanic white (72%); male (89%); age 65 or older (40%); and 40% have a disability\(^5\).

Primary Prevention

Preventing chronic disease starts with you. Your lifestyle, including maintaining a healthy diet, being physically active, and reducing risky behaviors, greatly impacts your health and overall quality of life.

Keep up the good work!

Regardless of differences in sex and age, compared to non-veterans, veterans are more likely to:

- Have gotten a flu shot in the past year: 80% higher
- Be a non-smoker: 20% higher
- Have not engaged in binge drinking in the past 30 days: 30% higher

Although the proportion of those participating in leisure time physical activity in the past 30 days does not differ between veterans and non-veterans, we are exceeding the Healthy People 2020 goal (HP2020)\(^6\) in SC!

All women have room to improve!

The proportion of those meeting the breast cancer screening recommendation (ages 50-74) does not differ between veterans and non-veterans, and we are not meeting the Healthy People 2020 (HP2020) goal\(^6\) in SC.

Chronic Diseases

An unhealthy lifestyle and not seeing your doctor regularly can lead to chronic diseases, which are leading causes of death and disability in the US\(^7\). However, successfully managing a chronic disease is possible, which reduces complications and early death.

Keep up the good work!

Regardless of differences in sex and age, compared to non-veterans, veterans have better odds of:

- Not having hypertension: 20% higher
- Not currently having asthma: 30% higher

We all have room to improve!

There is no difference between veterans and non-veterans in regards to the proportion of those:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SC VETERANS AND NON-VETERANS</th>
<th>HP2020</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Living with diabetes</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Living with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease</td>
<td>8%</td>
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</tbody>
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Screening for Disease

Visiting a doctor regularly and following screening recommendations for cancers and chronic diseases is important for preventing disease or early diagnosis.

Keep up the good work!

Regardless of differences in sex and age, compared to non-veterans, veterans have better odds of:

| Having seen a doctor for a checkup in the past year | 70% higher |
| Meeting the cervical cancer screening recommendations (women ages 21-65) | 120% higher |
| Meeting the colorectal cancer screening recommendations (ages 50-75)* | 30% higher |
| Getting their blood sugar tested in the past three years | 60% higher |

We all have room to improve!

There is no difference between veterans and non-veterans in regards to the proportion of those:

| Have not engaged in heavy/binge drinking in the past 30 days | 93% |
| Consuming fruit 1 or more times per day* | 53% |
| Consuming vegetables 1 or more times per day* | 75% |
**References**