

Overdue EPIC Health Maintenance

By Jacqueline Redmer

I receive several email notifications regarding my overdue health maintenance • The electronic health record reminds me that it is time for a Pap smear • I want to be healthy • I have always been told my lipid panel is good because my HDL cholesterol is high • If I am being honest, I will admit that I often tell lies to make people happy • The chart says it is time to schedule a mammogram • Turns out I have spent a lifetime trying to forget parts of my body • Colorectal cancer runs in my family • Sometimes my thoughts feel crazy and dark • EPIC says I do not need a depression screen • I have scars on my body from wounds that were self-inflicted • No, nope, I will not be in need of STD testing this year • I tend to under-report my smoking history • My diabetes screen is up to date • I tend to over-report my physical activity level • My immunization records are current • Now that I am well into in my 40s, I find that I am finally starting to notice some of the ways my body holds onto emotion • That 3rd Covid booster hit me like a sledgehammer • Yes, I will still take the influenza vaccine this year • The irony that being healthy involves acknowledging some of the unhealthy stories lying dormant in the body • I am glad cardiovascular disease does not run in my family • The truth feels like it is ripping me open • My heart is getting bigger.

Jacqueline Redmer works as a family medicine physician in rural WI. She started writing poetry during the COVID pandemic. Redmer is currently enrolled in the Columbia Narrative Medicine CPA program.