With a Second Health Center, Walmart Hopes to Solidify Itself as a Care Provider

The retailer offers services such as routine checkups, eye and dental exams, and therapy and may expand nationwide.

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Most people go to Walmart to buy groceries, electronics or other merchandise. But Americans across the country may soon be able to see a primary care doctor at the department store. The country's largest retailer recently opened a second Walmart Health center in Calhoun, Georgia, and has plans to open more medical care facilities, CNN reports.

Walmart Health allows patients—both insured and uninsured—to see doctors for routine checkups and ongoing treatment of chronic illnesses, such as diabetes and heart disease, as well as get lab work, X-rays, dental care, behavioral health counseling, eye and hearing exams and more.

For adults without insurance, an annual checkup costs $30, an eye exam is $25, a dental exam costs $25 and therapy sessions are $60.

Walmart isn't completely new to the health care industry. Some of its stores include pharmacies and optical departments. For several years, the company has also operated health clinics with limited services in Georgia, South Carolina and Texas.

But Walmart's goal is to offer even more health care services to customers without health insurance or those with insurance plans with high deductibles and out-of-pocket costs.

Last September, Walmart launched its first health center in Dallas, Georgia. The company specifically selected Dallas and Calhoun because of their higher rates of chronic disease and their lack of primary care doctors compared with typical American communities.

While Walmart hopes to replace patients' current primary care doctors altogether, experts question whether the company can be as successful a provider as it has been a retailer.

But according to Jimmy Palmer, Calhoun's mayor, the center's opening has been positive for the community, especially since it's open on weekends unlike most doctors' offices.

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