

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Highlights High-Priority Evidence Gaps in 2018 Report to Congress

Calls for more research on cancer prevention and cardiovascular health

WASHINGTON, D.C. – November 15, 2018 – Today, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) released its eighth annual Report to Congress, highlighting seven recent topics related to cancer prevention and cardiovascular health where more research is needed. These topics are:

Cancer Prevention

- Screening for Cervical Cancer, Especially Among Diverse Populations
- Screening for Prostate Cancer, Especially Among African American Men and Men With a Family History
- Screening and Behavioral Counseling for Skin Cancer

Cardiovascular Health

- Screening for Atrial Fibrillation With Electrocardiography
- Screening for Cardiovascular Disease Risk With Electrocardiography
- Risk Assessment for Cardiovascular Disease With Nontraditional Risk Factors
- Screening for Peripheral Artery Disease and Cardiovascular Disease Risk Assessment With the Ankle-Brachial Index

“Cardiovascular disease and cancer are the leading causes of death among adults in the United States,” says Task Force chair Susan J. Curry, Ph.D. “By highlighting priority research needs within these two disease areas, we hope to inspire researchers to fill critical evidence gaps and help improve the health of Americans.”

In some cases, clinical preventive services have been well studied for the general population, but there are important evidence gaps that prevent the Task Force from making recommendations for specific populations, such as certain racial and ethnic minority groups and age groups.

“Our report also calls for more research in populations who are disproportionately affected by these conditions, yet often underrepresented in studies,” says Task Force vice chair, Douglas K. Owens, M.D., M.S. “With a more inclusive evidence base, the Task Force can make recommendations that work to eliminate health disparities and improve the quality of preventive care.”

The report also provides an update on the Task Force’s activities over the past year, during which it continued to work on a full portfolio of topics that includes more than 80 preventive service recommendations. From October 1, 2017 to September 30, 2018, the public had the opportunity to comment on 11 draft research plans and 13 draft recommendation statements. The Task Force also published 15 final recommendation statements in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* and on its Web site. In January 2018, the USPSTF published 11 articles in a special issue of the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*.

The “Eighth Annual Report to Congress on High-Priority Evidence Gaps for Clinical Preventive Services” can be found on the Task Force Web site at <http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/Page/Name/reports-to-congress>.

The Task Force is an independent, volunteer panel of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine that works to improve the health of all Americans by making evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services such as screenings, counseling services, and preventive medications.

Dr. Curry is interim executive vice president and provost of the University of Iowa, where she also serves as a distinguished professor of health management and policy in the College of Public Health. She is also a member of the National Academy of Medicine. Dr. Curry's many professional activities include past service as dean of the University of Iowa College of Public Health from 2008 to 2017, vice chair of the board of directors of the Truth Initiative, and member of the National Cancer Institute's Board of Scientific Advisors.

Dr. Owens is a general internist and associate director of the Center for Innovation to Implementation at the Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System. He is the Henry J. Kaiser, Jr., professor at Stanford University, where he is also a professor of medicine, health research and policy (by courtesy), and management science and engineering (by courtesy). Dr. Owens is director of the Center for Primary Care and Outcomes Research in the Stanford University School of Medicine and the Center for Health Policy in the Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies.

Contact: USPSTF Media Coordinator at Newsroom@USPSTF.net / (202) 572-2044