

## U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Highlights High-Priority Evidence Gaps in 2022 Report to Congress

*Task Force calls for more research to improve healthy behaviors across the lifespan*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – November 16, 2022 – Today, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) released its 12th Annual Report to Congress on evidence gaps related to promoting healthy behaviors throughout life. The report reinforces the Task Force's commitment to improving health equity by highlighting research gaps specific to high-risk populations. Too often, risk level is determined by disparities that persist in healthcare and health outcomes based on age, race and ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, and social determinants of health, such as economic and social conditions. Improved representation in research can lead to better, evidence-based guidance for all people.

"This year's report calls attention to important gaps where the scientific evidence is lacking related to promoting healthy behaviors across the lifespan," says Task Force chair Carol Mangione, M.D., M.S.P.H. "We know that everyone can improve their health by participating in physical activity, eating a healthy diet, and eliminating unhealthy alcohol and tobacco use. We hope this call for more research will result in important evidence that we can review to make recommendations that will help improve the health of people nationwide."

Even though the United States is one of the wealthiest nations in the world, our population has a shorter life expectancy compared to other developed countries—largely due to chronic diseases, such as cancer, heart disease, diabetes, obesity, and respiratory diseases, among others. Six in 10 adults live with at least one chronic disease, and 4 in 10 have multiple chronic conditions, making chronic diseases the leading causes of death and disability in the United States.

"Adopting a healthy lifestyle from childhood to adolescence and into adulthood is an effective way to improve one's quality of life and prevent chronic disease," says Task Force vice chair Michael Barry, M.D. "Although chronic health conditions may affect anyone, some groups of people are at higher risk because of factors such as race, ethnicity, income, and geographic location, among others."

The report includes an update on the Task Force's activities over the past year, during which it continued to work on a full portfolio of more than 88 preventive service topics. This year, the Task Force published 12 final recommendation statements in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. It also made 16 draft recommendation statements and nine draft research plans available to the public for comment as well as provided ongoing opportunities for topic and Task Force member nominations.

The "12th Annual Report to Congress on High-Priority Evidence Gaps for Clinical Preventive Services" can be found on the Task Force website at <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/about-uspstf/reports-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 people nationwide by making evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services such as screenings, counseling services, and preventive medications.

Dr. Mangione is the chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine and Health Services Research; holds the Barbara A. Levey, M.D., and Gerald S. Levey, M.D., endowed chair in medicine; and is a distinguished professor of medicine and public health at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and the executive vice chair for Health Equity and Health Services Research in the UCLA Department of Medicine.

Dr. Barry is the director of the Informed Medical Decisions Program in the Health Decision Sciences Center at Massachusetts General Hospital. He is also a professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School and a primary care clinician at Massachusetts General Hospital.

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