

August 11, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

On behalf of the nearly 200 undersigned organizations representing patients, parents, workers, small businesses, health care providers, public health professionals and other health care consumers—including those living with and at risk of developing chronic illnesses and disabilities—we write to express our deep concern for the future of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). **We urge you to maintain the current structure, membership, and processes of the USPSTF to ensure that this objective, scientifically independent panel of experts can continue to make unbiased, evidence-based recommendations about clinical preventive services that improve the lives of people across our nation.**

News reports indicate that you are considering replacing the current USPSTF members en masse, without transparent and evidence-based justification. To do so would not only undermine decades of bipartisan public health progress, precedent and practice but would erode trust in the integrity of our public health system and ultimately put lives at risk while increasing costs.ⁱ The USPSTF recommendations help primary care providers know which preventive services to recommend for their patients, helping patients avoid costly chronic disease, and it provides expert evaluation to decide which preventive services are fully covered without cost-sharing through insurance.ⁱⁱ Its work is foundational to a health care system that values prevention, equity, and affordability. At a time when health care costs are soaring, we need to strengthen, not weaken the trust and commitment to evidence-based preventive services as the bedrock of health care and ensure continued access to affordable, lifesaving preventive services.ⁱⁱⁱ

Preserving the Non-Partisan Precedent of Promoting Prevention

Since 1984, spanning five Republican and Democratic presidential administrations, USPSTF, an appointed panel of 16 independent volunteer medical experts with practice experience in fields like behavioral health, family medicine, geriatrics, internal medicine, pediatrics, obstetrics and gynecology, and nursing, have been making evidence-based recommendations about preventive health services and remain trusted by physicians, other clinicians and patients.^{iv} The USPSTF develops recommendations on more than 90 preventive health topics across the age spectrum, from medications that prevent eye infections in newborns to exercise programs that prevent falls among older adults, as well as critical guidance related to cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular health, HIV, mental health, and maternal health.^v

Protecting the Integrity of the Task Force

USPSTF's success is largely due to its long history of ensuring that comprehensive, systematic reviews and careful assessment of the available medical evidence guide their decisions—not politics or profits. The process for appointing members for staggered terms assures continuity and consistency in task force deliberations. USPSTF members adhere to strict conflict of interest

disclosures, which are publicly posted for anyone to review. **This continued trust, independence and reliance on rigorous scientific process is crucial as USPSTF’s recommendations inform the work of hundreds of thousands of primary care providers and bind insurance companies to cover the care without cost sharing. The recommendations must continue to be promulgated in ways that are consistent with USPSTF’s statutory obligations.**^{vi}

Safeguarding the Health of All Americans

Over the 40 years of the USPSTF’s existence, countless lives have likely been saved and many serious illnesses avoided due to its often simple and inexpensive recommendations.^{vii}

One of those lives is John¹, a 47-year-old husband and father of two, who was recently diagnosed with colon cancer despite experiencing no symptoms and having no family history. Based on USPSTF’s updated recommendation, his primary care physician screened him for colon cancer, rather than waiting 3 years until he turned 50 years old.^{viii} As a result, they caught the cancer early; the subsequent surgery was successful; and this patient has an excellent chance of long-term survival. If his doctor had not had the latest science at his fingertips, recommended by a trusted and independent USPSTF, this screening would have been delayed, the cancer more advanced, and his chances of living to see his children grow up, much slimmer.

Containing Health Care Costs

The USPSTF’s recommendations are not just lifesaving but also cost saving for patients and for our broader health care system. Early detection through recommended screenings leads to timely treatment at significantly lower cost.^{ix} Preventing diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease is far less expensive and less invasive than managing their late-stage consequences. For example, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that the average cost to treat an HIV infection is more than \$500,000, while the cost of generic PrEP is as little as \$1 per dose.^{xxi} Similarly, breast cancer prevention recommended by USPSTF, which includes not only mammography but also medicine to prevent breast cancer for patients at elevated risk, is cost effective and has been shown to improve quality of life through early detection.^{xii}

Recognizing this cost-effectiveness, the Affordable Care Act requires most private insurers to cover preventive services rated “A” or “B” by the USPSTF at no cost to patients. This ensures access to critical services like pap smears, colonoscopies, and screenings for chronic conditions, allowing Americans to stay healthier, longer.^{xiii} Research consistently shows that even small out-of-pocket costs can deter people from seeking preventive care, leading to worse outcomes and higher expenses down the line.^{xiv}

If the current USPSTF is dismantled or their rigorous process undermined, we fear that patients, health plans and providers will be left without trusted recommendations, leading to confusion as to what services should be covered without cost-sharing as a basic benefit, and to otherwise manage health care. This could result in a void of information that may be filled by financially motivated interests or ad hoc decision-makers without the same scientific rigor or public accountability.

¹ Name changed for patient privacy

Save the USPSTF Structure as a Primary Part of Making America Healthy

We cannot "Make America Healthy Again" without trusted, evidence-based, and affordable preventive health services. We urge you to defend the mission of the USPSTF and preserve it in its entirety, along with its essential support from the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. Any attempt to restructure the Task Force, remove its members, withdraw support, or undermine its processes would jeopardize access to no-cost, life-saving care for millions of Americans. At a time when families are already burdened by high prescription drug prices and hospital bills, such a move would only deepen the crisis.

We urge you to stand with patients, uphold scientific independence, and reaffirm your commitment to a preventive, patient-centered approach to health care. Protecting the USPSTF is protecting the future of American health.

Thank you for your consideration and ongoing engagement.

Respectfully,

Abortion Forward
ACA Consumer Advocacy
AcademyHealth
Advocacy Action Network
Advocates for Youth
African American Health Alliance (AAHA)
AFT: Education, Healthcare, Public Services
AIDS Action Baltimore
AIDS Foundation Chicago
AIDS United
AJL Community Health LLC
American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
American Academy of HIV Medicine
American Association for Dental Oral & Craniofacial Research
American Association of Birth Centers
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American College of Clinical Pharmacy
American College of Nurse Midwives - Maryland
American College of Osteopathic Internists
American Kidney Fund
American Public Health Association
American Society of Hematology
APHA Food and Nutrition Section
APLA Health
Arkansas Black Gay Men's Forum
ArtBra New Haven
Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum
Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
Aunt Rita's Foundation

Autistic Self Advocacy Network (ASAN)
Autistic Women & Nonbinary Network
AVAC
Bienestar Human Services
Black Women's Health Imperative
BLKHLTH
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Care in Action
Center for Children and Families, Georgetown
Center for Health Law and Policy Innovation
Center for Health Progress
Center for Law and Social Policy
Center for Medicare Advocacy
CenterLink
Chicago House and Social Service Agency
Chicago Women's AIDS Project
Children Now
Children's HealthWatch
Children's Oral Health Network of Maine
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Coai, Inc.
Coalition for Hemophilia B
Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Colorado Consumer Health Initiative
Colorado Fiscal Institute
Colorado Gynecologic Cancer Alliance
Community Catalyst
Conscious Talk Radio
CrescentCare
Diverse Elders Coalition
Doctors for America
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
End Child Poverty California
Equal Rights Advocates
Equality Florida
EverThrive Illinois
Fair Wisconsin
Families USA
Family Equality
Five Horizons Health Services
Frey Evaluation, LLC
Georgia AIDS Coalition
Georgia Equality
GLMA
Gold Coast Doula, LLC
Guttmacher Institute

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America
Health Justice
Health Resources in Action
HealthBegins
HealthConnect One
HealthHIV
Healthy Teen Network
Hepatitis B Foundation
HIV Dental Alliance
HIV Medicine Association
Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, USA-JPIC
Immunize.org
Inseparable
Institute for Public Health Innovation
Institute for Women's Policy Research
International Association of Providers of AIDS Care
Japanese American Citizens League
Justice in Aging
Kentucky Voices for Health
Lawyers for Good Government
Legal Action Center
Lighthouse CDC
Los Angeles LGBT Center
March of Dimes
Maryland Association of School Health Nurses
Maryland Community Health System
Maryland Dental Action Coalition
Maryland Hepatitis Coalition
Maryland Occupational Therapy Association
Maternal Mental Health Leadership Alliance
Mazzoni Center
Michigan Council for Maternal Child Health
MomsRising
Mother and Child Alliance
NASTAD
National Action Network
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd
National Alliance for HIV Education and Workforce
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) - Utah
National Association of NPs in Women's Health
National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of Social Workers
National Coalition for LGBTQ Health
National Coalition of STD Directors

National Consumers League
National Family Planning & Reproductive Health Association
National Health Care for the Homeless Council
National Health Law Program
National Hispanic Medical Association (NHMA)
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
NC AIDS Action Network
NETWORK Lobby for Catholic Social Justice
New Jersey Association of Mental Health & Addiction Agencies
New Jersey Citizen Action
NMAC
Northwest Health Law Advocates
Nurses for America
Organization for Latino Health Advocacy
Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provs.
Partners In Health
Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Power to Decide
PrEP4All
Prevention Institute
Primary Care Development Corporation
Proactive Community Services
Protect Our Care
Psychotherapy Action Network
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)
Public Citizen
Public Health Foundation
Religious Community for Reproductive Choice
Reproductive Freedom for All
Reproductive Justice Maryland
Rural Medical Services
SAGE
San Francisco AIDS Foundation
Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy
Service Employees International Union
Small Business Majority
Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine
Society for Public Health Education
SolidarityINFOService
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center
SPAN Parent Advocacy Network
State Innovation Exchange (SiX)
T1International
TAA

Tennessee Health Care Campaign
 Tennessee Justice Center
 Thacker & Thompson, MD
 The AIDS Institute
 The American Institute of Dental Public Health
 The Cancer Network
 The Children's Partnership
 The Institute for Health Research & Policy at Whitman-Walker
 The National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
 Thrive Alabama
 Treatment Action Group
 Triage Cancer
 Truth Initiative
 United Church of Christ
 Virginia Breast Cancer Foundation
 Vivent Health
 Voices for Vermont's Children
 Voices of Health Care Action
 West Virginia Center on Budget and Policy
 West Virginians for Affordable Health Care

Cc: The Honorable John Thune, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
 The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
 The Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
 The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives

ⁱ Liz Essley Whyte, RFK Jr. to Oust Advisory Panel on Cancer Screenings, HIV Prevention Drugs, The Wall Street Journal, 25 July 2025, https://www.wsj.com/health/healthcare/rfk-health-screening-panel-members-c308cbb0?gaa_at=eafs&gaa_n=ASWzDAgbKu7VBsUabuqzHFbq1Ff5l5y0FBUJ6JQrh1lQYXJDC8S1ddaRM2CaRGDrk4o%3D&gaa_ts=68866284&gaa_sig=ZV9lOf2Ko_40jgC5DtnRDcypH31-J2ZErMKBJ4iyM15uzrxMbWdIzPzAQzk_LWMwBFkRB9aasNyeCIIUbPiPVQA%3D%3D

ⁱⁱ U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, USPSTF: The Primary Care Clinician's Source for Prevention Recommendations, USPSTF, accessed August 2025, <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/about-uspstf/task-force-resources/primary-care-clinicians-source-factsheet>

ⁱⁱⁱ U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, Recommendation Topics, USPSTF, accessed August 2025, <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation-topics>

^{iv} U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, Current Members, USPSTF, accessed August 2025, <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/about-uspstf/current-members>

^v U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, Recommendation Topics, USPSTF, accessed August 2025, <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/recommendation-topics>

^{vi} 42 U.S.C. §299b–4 (2010)

^{vii} *An ounce of prevention ... can save a person's life*. An Ounce of Prevention ... Can Save a Person's Life - News & Events. (2022, August 26). <https://odphp.health.gov/news/202208/ounce-prevention-can-save-persons-life>

^{viii} Star J, Siegel RL, Smith RA, Schafer EJ, Jemal A, Bandi P. Trends in Colorectal Cancer Screening in US Adults Aged 45 to 49 Years. JAMA. Published online August 04, 2025. doi:10.1001/jama.2025.10618

^{ix} American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS-CAN), Early Detection and Screening Can Save Lives & Money, ACS-CAN, 30 April 2024, <https://www.fightcancer.org/policy-resources/early-detection-and-screening-can-save-lives-money>

^x Bingham, A., Shrestha, R. K., Khurana, N., Jacobson, E. U., & Farnham, P. G. (2021). Estimated Lifetime HIV-Related Medical Costs in the United States. *Sexually transmitted diseases*, 48(4), 299–304. <https://doi.org/10.1097/OLQ.0000000000001366>

^{xi} Ballreich, J., Levengood, T., & Conti, R. M. (2022). Opportunities and Challenges of Generic Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis Drugs for HIV. *The Journal of law, medicine & ethics : a journal of the American Society of Law, Medicine & Ethics*, 50(S1), 32–39. <https://doi.org/10.1017/jme.2022.33>

^{xii} Rim, S. H., Allaire, B. T., Ekwueme, D. U., Miller, J. W., Subramanian, S., Hall, I. J., & Hoerger, T. J. (2019). Cost-effectiveness of breast cancer screening in the National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program. *Cancer causes & control : CCC*, 30(8), 819–826. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10552-019-01178-y>

^{xiii} U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, *Appendix I. Congressional Mandate Establishing the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force*, USPSTF, April 2019. <https://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf/about-uspstf/methods-and-processes/procedure-manual/procedure-manual-appendix-i>

^{xiv} Dean, L. T., Nunn, A. S., Chang, H. Y., Bakre, S., Goedel, W. C., Dawit, R., Saberi, P., Chan, P. A., & Doshi, J. A. (2024). Estimating The Impact Of Out-Of-Pocket Cost Changes On Abandonment Of HIV Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis. *Health affairs (Project Hope)*, 43(1), 36–45. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2023.00808>