U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Issues Final Recommendation Statement on Screening for Hepatitis B Virus Infection in Adolescents and Adults
Task Force recommends screening people at increased risk for hepatitis B infection

WASHINGTON, D.C. – December 15, 2020 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today published a final recommendation statement on screening for hepatitis B virus infection in adolescents and adults. Based on its review of the evidence, the Task Force recommends that clinicians screen teens and adults at increased risk of hepatitis B infection to help prevent serious health problems. **This is a B recommendation.**

Grade in this recommendation:

B: Recommended.

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Hepatitis B is a virus that affects the liver and is spread through contact with the blood and body fluids of an infected person. About 860,000 people in the United States are living with hepatitis B. If left untreated, hepatitis B can lead to serious health problems, including cancer and liver failure. Most people with hepatitis B do not show signs or symptoms and do not know they are infected. This increases the chance that they could spread it to others.

"Screening teens and adults who are at increased risk for hepatitis B infection can help detect the virus and enable treatment to prevent serious health effects," says Task Force member Chyke Doubeni, M.D., M.P.H. "Evidence consistently shows that screening and early treatment leads to better health outcomes."

People at the greatest risk for hepatitis B infection are often infected at birth. They include people born in regions of the world with a high prevalence of hepatitis B, and people born in the United States who did not get vaccinated at birth and have parents from regions with a high prevalence of hepatitis B. Other people at increased risk of infection include those who inject drugs or have injected drugs, men who have sex with men, and those who have HIV.

"It's important for healthcare providers to understand their patients' risk for hepatitis B infection so they can determine who will benefit from screening," says Task Force member Aaron Caughey, M.D., M.P.P., M.P.H., Ph.D. "Assessing risk includes discussing personal circumstances, behaviors, and vaccination history with teen and adult patients."

The Task Force's final recommendation statement and corresponding evidence summary have been published online in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, as well as on the Task Force website at http://uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org. A draft version of the recommendation statement and evidence review were available for public comment from May 5, 2020, to June 1, 2020. The Task Force also has a recommendation for screening for hepatitis B in pregnant women.

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. Doubeni is a professor of family medicine and medicine and directs health equity and community engagement research efforts at the Mayo Clinic to advance the ideal of health equity locally and globally through research and community engagement.

Dr. Caughey is a professor in and chair of the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the associate dean for Women's Health Research and Policy at Oregon Health & Science University. He is the founder and chair of the Oregon Perinatal Collaborative, funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which aims to improve outcomes for women and infants through guidelines and policies, working with all the health systems in the state.

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