

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) is an independent group of national experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine. The Task Force 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. These recommendations only apply to people who have no signs or symptoms of the specific disease or condition that the screening, counseling, or preventive medication targets. Recommendations address only services offered in the primary care setting or services referred by a primary care clinician. The Task Force follows a multi-step process when developing each of its recommendations.

## Topic Nomination

- Anyone can **nominate** a new topic or an update to an existing topic at any time on the USPSTF Web site.
- The Task Force **prioritizes** topics based on several criteria, including: the topic's relevance to prevention and primary care, importance for public health, potential impact of the recommendation, and whether there is new evidence that may change a current recommendation.
- Once the Task Force **selects** a topic for review, it follows the process below to develop a recommendation.

## Draft and Final Research Plan

- The Task Force and researchers from an Evidence-based Practice Center (EPC) **develop** a draft research plan for the topic. The draft research plan includes key questions to be answered and target populations to be considered.
- The draft research plan is posted on the Task Force Web site for four weeks, during which anyone can **comment** on the draft research plan.
- The Task Force and the EPC **review** all comments and considers them while making any necessary revisions to the research plan.
- The Task Force then **finalizes** the plan and **posts** the final research plan on the USPSTF Web site.

## Draft Evidence Review and Draft Recommendation Statement

- Using the final research plan as a guide, EPC researchers **gather, review** and **analyze** evidence on the topic from studies published in peer-reviewed scientific journals.
- The EPC then **develops** a draft evidence review summarizing the evidence on the topic.
- The Task Force members **discuss** the evidence review and use the information to determine the effectiveness of a service by weighing the potential benefits and harms.
- The Task Force members **develop** a draft recommendation statement based on this discussion.
- The draft recommendation statement and draft evidence review are posted on the Task Force Web site for four weeks, during which anyone can **comment** on these materials.

## Final Evidence Review and Final Recommendation Statement

- The Task Force and EPC **review** all comments and consider them while making any necessary revisions to the recommendation statement and evidence review.
- The EPC **finalizes** the evidence review and then the Task Force **finalizes** the recommendation statement.
- The Task Force **posts** the final recommendation statement and final evidence review on its Web site. The final recommendation statement and a evidence summary, a document that outlines the evidence the Task Force reviewed, are also **published** in a peer-reviewed scientific journal.