

## U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Highlights High-Priority Evidence Gaps in 2024 Report to Congress

*Task Force calls for more research to improve the health of all people across the lifespan*

WASHINGTON, D.C. – November 20, 2024 – Today, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) released its 14th Annual Report to Congress. The report focuses on evidence gaps related to promoting the health of people across the lifespan, in all communities, and features topics that the Task Force published in the last year, including:

- Prevention of Child Maltreatment: Primary Care Interventions
- Speech and Language Delay and Disorders in Children: Screening
- High Body Mass Index in Children and Adolescents: Interventions
- Oral Health in Children, Adolescents, and Adults: Screening and Preventive Interventions
- Iron Deficiency and Iron Deficiency Anemia During Pregnancy: Screening and Supplementation
- Breast Cancer: Screening
- Falls Prevention in Community-Dwelling Older Adults: Interventions

Through this report, the Task Force reinforces its commitment to improving health equity by highlighting research gaps that are reflective of populations disproportionately affected by these conditions. 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. Addressing these inequities through research can lead to the Task Force making recommendations that can help to overcome barriers to accessing healthcare and reduce disparities.

“With the Task Force celebrating 40 years of improving health this year, we wanted to focus our annual Report to Congress on high-priority research gaps related to promoting the health of people across the lifespan and in all communities,” says Task Force chair Wanda Nicholson, M.D., M.P.H., M.B.A. “We hope this call for more research will result in new evidence that we can use to develop recommendations that will continue to help people of all ages stay healthy for years to come.”

Preventive services facilitate the prevention or early detection of health issues. Early detection can lead to early intervention and better treatment outcomes, often preventing the progression of diseases and reducing the risk of disease complications. Preventive services combined with a healthy lifestyle can substantially reduce the risk of disease, disability, and death.

“Importantly, we are calling attention to specific populations, such as those in underserved or high-risk groups, who are disproportionately affected by the topics highlighted in this report,” says Task Force vice chair Michael Silverstein, M.D., M.P.H. “As part of our commitment to improving health equity, our report shines a light on populations that are most affected to help reduce disparities and ensure that all people across the nation get the preventive care that they need.”

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 89 preventive service topics. This year, the Task Force published eight final recommendation statements in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. It also made six draft recommendation statements and eight draft research plans available to the public for comment as well as provided ongoing opportunities for topic and Task Force member nominations.

The “14th 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. Nicholson is professor of prevention and community health at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at the George Washington University. She is an obstetrician-gynecologist; vice president of the board of directors of the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology; former editor of health equity, diversity, and inclusion for the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology; past chair of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusive Excellence Workgroup; and an immediate past member of the executive board of ACOG. Her clinical and research focus is on healthcare prevention across the woman's lifespan.

Dr. Silverstein is the George Hazard Crooker University professor of health services, policy, and practice at the Brown University School of Public Health and the director of Brown University's Hassenfeld Child Health Innovation Institute, which is charged with eliminating health inequities in pregnancy and childhood for Rhode Island families.

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