

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Outlines Actions to Help Mitigate Systemic Racism in Clinical Preventive Services

New article details work to promote antiracism and health equity

WASHINGTON, D.C. – November 8, 2021 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today published a new article titled, “Actions to Transform US Preventive Services Task Force Methods to Mitigate Systemic Racism in Clinical Preventive Services,” in the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)*. The article outlines how the Task Force is helping improve health equity by actively working to counteract the effects of systemic racism in health.

“Racism has a wide-ranging influence on people’s health, shaping everything from the types of health risks to which they may be exposed, to access to health information, to getting actual preventive care,” says Task Force member Chyke Doubeni, M.D., M.P.H. “The Task Force is committed to promoting antiracism and health equity in preventive care by confronting issues related to race and racism throughout our recommendation development process and across all facets of our work. Fundamentally, healthcare should not be harder to access and lower quality for some racial and ethnic groups than it is for others, and we are committed to doing our part to right that wrong.”

The *JAMA* article details concrete steps, grounded in the accompanying evidence review, that are underway to change Task Force methods, processes, and evidence-based recommendation statements. Based on the evidence the Task Force reviewed not nearly enough work has been done to understand the effects of systemic racism on people’s health or how to counteract it successfully. The Task Force is calling for more research in this area.

“As we update our processes, the Task Force is prioritizing topics that are likely to advance health equity, exploring the effects of race and racism in risk assessment tools, assessing our language to ensure it reflects culturally appropriate terminology, and calling for more research that includes people of color,” says Task Force Chair Karina Davidson, Ph.D., M.A.Sc. “Collectively, these efforts are aimed at reducing the effects of social injustices in healthcare and, ultimately, helping better equip clinicians with the evidence-based guidance they need to prevent disease and keep everyone as healthy as possible.”

The Task Force has begun to evaluate these new approaches to its recommendations by pilot testing them in several topics that focus on conditions with a disproportionate burden on people of color. Moving forward, the Task Force will continue to seek partner and public input in its activities and review its processes to identify additional ways to counteract the effects of systemic racism in preventive services.

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. 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. Davidson is senior vice president of research, dean of academic affairs, and head of a new institute focused on health system science including personalized trials at the Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research at Northwell Health. She is also a professor of behavioral medicine at the Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra University/Northwell Health.

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