

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Issues Draft Recommendation Statement on Primary Care Interventions for Prevention and Cessation of Tobacco Use in Children and Adolescents

Interventions can help prevent tobacco use; more research needed to help youth quit

WASHINGTON, D.C. – June 25, 2019 – The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) today posted a draft recommendation statement and draft evidence review on primary care interventions for prevention and cessation of tobacco use in children and adolescents. Based on its review of the evidence, the Task Force recommends that primary care clinicians provide interventions, including education or brief counseling, to prevent school-aged children and adolescents from starting to use tobacco. **This is a B recommendation.** More research is needed on how clinicians can help youth who use tobacco to quit. **This is an I statement.**

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, and this problem almost always begins before adulthood. Nearly 90 percent of smokers try their first cigarette before they are 18 years old.

“Preventing tobacco use among our young people is critical to the health of the nation,” says Task Force member Michael Silverstein, M.D., M.P.H. “All youth are at risk for tobacco use and should be provided with interventions to help prevent them from ever starting.”

Tobacco use includes conventional smoking (e.g., cigarette smoking) and vaping e-cigarettes. Importantly, vaping is now more common among youth than cigarette smoking. More than 1 million high school students used cigarettes in 2018, but more than 3 million—or one in five high school students—used e-cigarettes in that same year.

The Task Force also looked at the evidence on interventions to help children and teens who are already using tobacco to quit. It found a critical gap in the evidence on ways to help youth quit using tobacco.

“Helping youth quit using tobacco is vital to their health,” says Task Force member Chien-Wen Tseng, M.D., M.P.H., M.S.E.E. “Unfortunately, studies have not yet identified effective ways to help children and teens quit, and the Task Force is calling for more research in this area.”

The Task Force’s draft recommendation statement and draft evidence review have been posted for public comment on the Task Force Web site at www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org. Comments can be submitted from June 25, 2019, to July 22, 2019, at www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/tfcomment.htm.

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.

Grades in this recommendation:

B: Recommended.

I: The balance of benefits and harms cannot be determined.

[Learn more here](#)

Dr. Silverstein is a professor of pediatrics, director of the Division of General Academic Pediatrics, and vice chair of research for the Department of Pediatrics at the Boston University School of Medicine. He is also a staff pediatrician and associate chief medical officer for research and population health at Boston Medical Center.

Dr. Tseng is the Hawaii Medical Service Association endowed chair in health services and quality research, a professor, and the associate research director in the Department of Family Medicine and Community Health at the University of Hawaii John A. Burns School of Medicine.

Contact: USPSTF Media Coordinator at Newsroom@USPSTF.net / (202) 572-2044