

U.S. Preventive Services Task Force Highlights High-Priority Evidence Gaps in 2021 Report to Congress

Task Force calls for more research to improve health equity in heart disease and cancer prevention

WASHINGTON, D.C. – November 15, 2021 – Today, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) released its 11th annual Report to Congress, highlighting important research gaps related to health equity from recent recommendations on cardiovascular disease and cancer prevention. This report is part of the Task Force’s long-standing commitment to advancing health equity. Topics featured in the report include:

- Screening for Hypertension in Adults
- Aspirin Use to Prevent Preeclampsia and Related Morbidity and Mortality
- Screening for Prediabetes and Type 2 Diabetes
- Behavioral Counseling Interventions to Promote a Healthy Diet and Physical Activity for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention in Adults With Cardiovascular Risk Factors
- Screening for Lung Cancer
- Screening for Colorectal Cancer

The research gaps in this report highlight various issues related to health equity, including underrepresentation in research, accurately assessing risk, and determining the benefits and harms of preventive services.

“In this year’s Report to Congress, we prioritized health equity and highlighted essential research needs from recent recommendations on heart disease and cancer,” says Task Force chair Karina Davidson, Ph.D., M.A.Sc. “The Task Force is committed to doing its part to reduce health disparities, including identifying the evidence gaps around health inequities and communicating the areas of greatest need.”

Heart disease and cancer, the two topics selected to feature in this report, represent the top two leading causes of death in the United States. For both conditions, there are disparities in deaths, illness, occurrence of complications, and risk factors by race and ethnicity.

“Greater inclusion of populations historically underrepresented in research will help the Task Force issue recommendations that improve the quality of preventive care for all,” says Task Force vice chair Carol Mangione, M.D., M.S.P.H. “We hope to inspire collaboration among researchers to generate new knowledge in the prevention of diseases, promoting health equity, and closing key evidence gaps.”

The report includes an update on the Task Force’s activities over the past year, during which it continued to work on its full portfolio of more than 86 preventive service topics. This year, the Task Force published 15 final recommendation statements in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. It also made nine draft recommendation statements and 13 draft research plans available to the public for comment and provided ongoing opportunities for topic and Task Force member nominations.

The “11th 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. 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 Institute 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.

Dr. Mangione is the chief of the Division of General Internal Medicine and Health Services Research and the Barbara A. Levey, M.D., and Gerald S. Levey, M.D., endowed chair in medicine, at the David Geffen School of Medicine at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) and Department of Medicine Executive Vice Chair for Health Equity and Health Services Research. She is a professor of public health at the UCLA Fielding School of Public Health, director of the UCLA Resource Center for Minority Aging Research/Center for Health Improvement of Minority Elderly, and associate director of the UCLA Clinical and Translational Science Institute. Dr. Mangione is a member of the National Academy of Medicine.

Contact: USPSTF Media Coordinator at Newsroom@USPSTF.net / (301) 951-9203