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USPSTF Transparency and Accountability Act (H.R. 539)

REQUEST

The Alliance of Specialty Medicine (Alliance) urges Congress to ensure that the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) has greater accountability and transparency. We urge lawmakers to **cosponsor** the “**USPSTF Transparency and Accountability Act**” (H.R. 539) introduced in the House by Representatives Marsha Blackburn (R-TN) and Bobby Rush (D-IL). The House Energy and Commerce Health Subcommittee held a hearing on the bill in November 2016. The Alliance urges Congress to pass H.R. 539.

BACKGROUND

The “USPSTF Transparency and Accountability Act” includes critical reforms that would ensure the USPSTF: (1) publishes research plans and makes available reports on evidence and recommendations for public comment; (2) ensures that medical specialty physicians are included on the Task Force; (3) establishes a stakeholders board to advise it on developing, updating, publishing and disseminating evidence-based recommendations; (4) codifies the grading system so it cannot be changed without appropriate review; and (5) ensures that Medicare or other payors cannot deny payment for a preventive service solely based on the task force grade.

RATIONALE

There has been concern regarding a number of USPSTF recommendations, including those related to mammography, skin cancer screening, and prostate-specific antigen (PSA) screening, and their effect on limiting access to high quality, patient-centered care for Americans. Many times, these recommendations contradict physician clinical guidelines based on medical literature, the American Cancer Society, and others with expertise in the clinical topic under review. Recommendations and consideration of the scientific evidence are important, but the reality of these recommendations is undermining new models of care delivery that are patient-centered, comprehensive, coordinated, accessible, and focused on quality.

The Alliance is concerned that the USPSTF has little accountability. Its members are appointed by the Director of the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), who is not confirmed by Congress. In addition, the Task Force is neither required to meet with relevant stakeholders during their review process, nor do medical specialists serve on the Task Force or have a formalized role to provide appropriate input. It is imperative that the USPSTF implement procedures that allow for meaningful input from appropriate medical experts during evidence-based recommendation development.

CONTACTS

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