

July 28, 2025

Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Ave, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

On behalf of our nation's largest association in the United States advancing the entire pharmacy profession and representing our nations over 340,000 pharmacists, 30,000 student pharmacists, and more than 400,000 pharmacy technicians, the American Pharmacists Association (APhA) asks you to sincerely consider maintaining the composition and regular meetings of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). We are deeply concerned about the disruption of the nation's guiding beacon for preventing acute and chronic illness. While we respect and understand your authority to make appointments to this Task Force, our concern is that wholesale dismissal and reappointment could have unintended consequences for the health of Americans and potentially run contrary to the Administration's goal of preventing chronic disease to make America a healthy nation.

USPSTF recommendations are closely followed by physicians, pharmacists, nurse practitioners, and other healthcare providers to routinely screen patients for various types of cancer. The standards for cancer screening for prostate, breast, uterine, and colon cancer took years to establish definitive guidelines identifying the ideal age of testing and the type of test. Dismantling the Task Force could result in confusion among both patients and healthcare providers regarding insurance coverage for these tests, leading to individuals delaying or forgoing testing altogether. As we saw during the 2020 pandemic, delays in testing led to delays in treatment, which led to increased costs for our system and unnecessary deaths.

As you know, the USPSTF guidelines have been instrumental in ensuring that the private insurance industry provides meaningful coverage for preventive services. These for-profit organizations cannot generally be relied upon to do the right thing and cover prevention activities in the absence of a government mandate for coverage, as recommended by the USPSTF. While your appointment of a new USPSTF task force would not remove the coverage mandate, it would, at least for a period, create confusion and provide a window of time when insurers might interrupt coverage.

For cardiovascular disease, the number one killer of Americans since 1950¹, save two years of infectious disease outbreaks, the USPSTF guidelines are invaluable in setting a clear standard for actions to prevent hypertension, high cholesterol, and diabetes. Insurance companies could stop covering the preventative screening activities of pharmacists and physicians for these chronic conditions, leading to greater costs for our healthcare system due to unnecessary emergency room visits and hospitalizations.

¹ <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/fullarticle/2784659>

There are a host of other critical illnesses and situations for which USPSTF makes recommendations that are vital to our public's health, including: HIV prevention, vaccine-preventable diseases prevention, prevention of sexually transmitted infections, smoking cessation, screening for depression and suicide risk in various populations, prevention of neural tube defects in newborns, physical activity guidance, screening for hepatitis C infection, screening and prevention of obesity, screening and prevention of osteoporosis in older adults, and screening and counseling of alcohol and drug use disorders among many others.

APhA believes it is in the best interest of public health that any changes to the USPSTF be made gradually over time, with new appointments being made in the normal cycle of change, so as not to disrupt the scientific foundation on which the nation's prevention recommendations are based. APhA also recommends that when you do make appointment decisions, you ensure broad representation of the health disciplines, including pharmacists, who are the backbone of our nation's community public health infrastructure. Together, we can make America one of the healthiest nations. We look forward to working with you and your team to do so and appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Michael D. Hogue, PharmD, FAPhA, FNAP, FFIP
Executive Vice President & CEO
American Pharmacists Association

cc: The Honorable John Thune, Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
 The Honorable Chuck Schumer, Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
 The Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
 The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
 The Honorable Mike Crapo, Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on Finance
 The Honorable Ron Wyden, Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Finance
 The Honorable Bill Cassidy, MD, Chair, U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
 The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Ranking Member, U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions
 The Honorable Jason Smith, Chair, U.S. House Ways and Means Committee
 The Honorable Richard Neal, Ranking Member, U.S. House Ways and Means Committee
 The Honorable Brett Guthrie, Chair, U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee
 The Honorable Frank Pallone, Ranking Member, U.S. House Energy and Commerce Committee