

April 19, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20006

Dear Mr. President:

We write to thank you for including an increase in funding for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) in its staffing and administrative support for the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) in your Fiscal Year 2024 budget proposal.

The USPSTF plays a vital role in ensuring patient access to life-saving clinical preventive services. While the USPSTF has made recommendations on which preventive services Americans should utilize since the 1980s, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) shifted the USPSTF's role from a scientific advisory board to one whose decisions impact federal benefit and coverage requirements. Despite this expanded role, the USPSTF's budget has remained essentially flat over the last decade.

While the USPSTF does an admirable job at reviewing the existing complex scientific literature and making thorough and educated recommendations, the rising costs of reviews and stagnant staffing levels are preventing the USPSTF from expeditiously updating its recommendations. Because of the funding limitations, the USPSTF has limited the number of recommendations it finalizes each year and has not revised its procedural manual to embrace process improvements, such as enhanced evidence surveillance, early updates, rapid reviews, and living reviews.

There are also concerns about the USPSTF's current approach to engaging the stakeholder community and incorporating evidence reflecting systemic health inequities into its recommendations. Scientific discovery is rapidly evolving, making it critical that the USPSTF has the resources, staffing, and processes in place to keep pace with innovation, medical literature, and patient needs.

The proposed Fiscal Year 2024 budget level of \$18.0 million, an increase of \$6.5 million over the Fiscal Year 2023 enacted level, will go a long way in improving the USPSTF's process, augmenting the USPSTF's staffing, and expediting patient access to critical clinical preventive services. We appreciate the USPSTF's commitment to using the increased funds to develop "revised methods of evidence surveillance, early updates, and 1-2 rapid reviews or living reviews a year to support early updates of the Task Force's recommendations."¹ In addition, we support the USPSTF's efforts to also use the funds to increase stakeholder engagement,

¹ [Budget Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees, Fiscal Year 2024 \(ahrq.gov\)](https://www.ahrq.gov/budget-justification-estimates-for-appropriations-committees-fiscal-year-2024)

enhance transparency, and improve the ongoing scientific review process to ensure recommendations better reflect evidence on health inequities.

We stand ready to work with your Administration and Congress to ensure that USPSTF is funded for Fiscal Year 2024 at the levels recommended. We encourage your Administration to ensure USPSTF updates the procedural manual to reflect these process improvements so that it is ready to take the necessary next steps once the appropriations bill becomes law.

We look forward to partnering with AHRQ and the USPSTF to enhance the USPSTF recommendation process and are united in the goal of advancing equitable patient access to life-saving clinical preventive services.

Sincerely,

AdvaMed
African American Breast Cancer Alliance
Alliance for Aging Research
ASPIRA Association, INC
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations (AAPCHO)
BRAf Bombers
Buck Cancer Foundation
California Life Sciences
Cancer Support Community
Center For Black Equity
Color of Crohn's and Chronic Illness (COCCI)
Colorectal Cancer Alliance
Community Liver Alliance
FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered
Geneoscopy, Inc.
Global Coalition on Aging Alliance for Health Innovation
Global Colon Cancer Association
Go2 for Lung Cancer
Guardant Health
Head and Neck Cancer Alliance
Healthcare Leadership Council
HealthHIV
ICAN, International Cancer Advocacy Network
Invitae Corporation
Medical Imaging & Technology Alliance (MITA)
Mental Health America
National Alliance on Mental Illness
National Black Nurses Association
National Collaborative for Health Equity
National Scleroderma Foundation

One Cancer Place
Ovarian Cancer Research Alliance
Patient Empowerment Network
Prostate Network
Renalytix Inc.
St Elizabeth Healthcare
The White Ribbon Project
Twisted Pink
UsAgainstAlzheimer's
ZERO Prostate Cancer

CC:
Office of Management and Budget
Health and Human Services
Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality