

# Hot Topics in Public Health: The Future of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and its Impact on Patient Access *Webinar Summary*



Community of Practice  
for US Advocacy Groups  
*Webinar Series*

US Public Affairs and Patient Advocacy  
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## Featured Speakers – USPSTF Overview: Avalere Health



**Haley Payne**  
**Associate Principal**  
**Avalere Health**



**Sarah Moselle**  
**Principal**  
**Avalere Health**

## Featured Speakers – Patient Advocacy Voices Panel



**Elizabeth Darnell**  
**Senior Director, Federal Advocacy**  
**American Cancer Society Cancer**  
**Action Network (ACS CAN)**



**Aaron Turner-Phifer**  
**Senior Director, Health Policy**  
**Breakthrough T1D**

## Why it Matters

Preventive services are essential for helping people access screenings and early diagnoses that improve health outcomes. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) plays a key role in shaping these services through evidence-based recommendations that influence coverage and clinical practice. With recent legal developments and potential changes to the task force's structure, advocates need clarity on how these decisions are made and what they mean for patients.

This webinar continued our **Hot Topics in Public Health** series with a focus on the future of USPSTF. The session featured experts from Avalere Health, Haley Payne and Sarah Moselle, who explained the task force's decision-making process and coverage implications. Advocacy leaders from ACS CAN and Breakthrough T1D shared how these recommendations impact cancer and diabetes screening respectively and offered strategies for engaging communities.

## Key Themes & Takeaways

### 1. Understanding USPSTF's Role and Process

- USPSTF develops evidence-based recommendations that guide preventive care and influence insurance coverage.
- Its multi-step process includes topic nomination, drafting and refining research plans with public input, reviewing evidence, and publishing recommendations.
- Recommendations are graded A, B, C, D, or I based on evidence strength. Updates occur every five years or sooner if new evidence emerges.

### 2. Coverage and Access Implications

- A and B grade recommendations must be covered without cost-sharing under the Affordable Care Act, shaping access for millions of Americans.
- Medicare covers A and B grades and may include C or I recommendations; traditional Medicaid coverage varies by state.
- These policies create opportunities and challenges for advocates working to ensure equitable access to preventive services.

### 3. Policy Landscape

- The Supreme Court decision in *Braidwood v. Kennedy* upheld USPSTF's authority and the ACA preventive services mandate.

- Attendees raised questions about the HHS reorganization and whether consolidating offices under a new “Office of Strategy” could affect USPSTF’s independence.
- Reports of potential membership changes underscore the need for advocates to monitor developments closely.

#### 4. Potential Impact on Preventive Services

- High-impact recommendations include breast and cervical cancer screening, HIV PrEP, and anxiety screening.
- Changes to USPSTF processes or membership could disrupt access to these services, making proactive advocacy essential.

Internal

Potential changes to USPSTF composition and processes could affect access to preventive services.






**Braidwood v. Kennedy:**

**Legal Challenge:**  
The plaintiffs challenge the constitutionality of the ACA’s preventive services mandate via 1) the appointment of USPSTF members and 2) their authority to require coverage for certain preventive services.

**Ruling:**  
The Supreme Court upheld the preventive services mandate and reinforced the role of USPSTF members as “inferior officers,” confirming HHS Secretary authority to appoint or remove them.

**Follow-up Developments:**  
The Wall Street Journal reported that the HHS Secretary intended to remove all current USPSTF members. No removals have yet been made.

**Potential to Impact Existing Recommendations:**

“A”/“B” Recommendation	Impact Potential
Breast Cancer: Screening: Women aged 40 to 74 years	 High
Cervical Cancer: Screening: Women aged 21 to 65 years	 High
Anxiety Disorders in Adults: Screening: Adults 64 years or younger	 Moderate
Prevention of Acquisition of HIV: PrEP: Adolescents and adults at increased risk of HIV	 High
Colorectal Cancer: Screening: (45-49 and 50-75)	 Moderate

**A** ACA: Affordable Care Act; HHS: US Department of Health and Human Services; PrEP: Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis; USPSTF: United States Preventive Services Task Force

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#### 5. Patient Advocacy Voices Panel

- ACS CAN highlighted the importance of USPSTF recommendations for cancer prevention and screening, noting concerns about delays or disruptions.
- Stalled meetings have paused updates on BRCA testing, cervical cancer, prostate cancer, tobacco cessation, and alcohol use screening.
- Breakthrough T1D described its recent submission for type 1 diabetes early detection and encouraged others to engage similarly, emphasizing the value of organizing communities and leveraging policy levers.
- Both organizations emphasized collaboration among advocacy groups to protect and expand access to preventive services.

## Insights from the Community

The discussion reflected strong engagement and practical concerns from advocacy leaders:


- **Timing and Process:** Participants asked how long USPSTF reviews take and whether updates follow a set cadence. Haley Payne from Avalere confirmed that recommendations are re-reviewed every five years or sooner if evidence changes. Reviews can be as quickly as 12–18 months but may follow a longer timeline.
- **Policy Questions:** Attendees raised concerns about the HHS reorganization and its potential impact on USPSTF's independence and functionality. Questions focused on the proposed move of USPSTF under the new Administration for a Healthy America and whether reductions in the workforce could affect the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality's ability to support the task force. Panelists emphasized that changes to infrastructure or membership could influence the scientific integrity of recommendations and payer benefit design.
- **Advocacy Strategies:** Breakthrough T1D shared its approach to promoting early screening for type 1 diabetes while awaiting USPSTF updates, prompting discussion on whether similar strategies could apply to other preventive services. Aaron highlighted that their USPSTF submission helped mobilize organizations and clinicians for support, creating new advocacy opportunities even before a decision is made.
- **Collaboration Offers:** Vaccinate Your Family invited partners to reach out for ACIP comment support and shared that templates would be posted on the Vaccination Collaborative listserv.
- **Resource Sharing:** ACS CAN provided links to its fact sheet on preventive services and updates on preserving access following the *Braidwood v. Kennedy* decision.


After the session, we polled participants and **53% felt very confident explaining USPSTF's role**, requesting additional resources and guidance on public comment opportunities.


***"We're not waiting for USPSTF. We're pulling as many levers as possible to raise awareness and accelerate this paradigm shift in care for people with Type 1 Diabetes."***


**Aaron Turner-Pfeiffer**  
Senior Director, Health Policy  
Breakthrough T1D

## Call-to-Action: How can you get involved?

 **Monitor USPSTF Updates:** Stay informed about upcoming recommendations and public comment periods.


 **Avalere Health Insight:** [What Would a USPSTF Overhaul Mean for Preventive Care Access? | Avalere Health Advisory](#)


 **Engage in Public Comments:** Use Vaccinate Your Family's ACIP comment guide below and reach out to Natasha Hansen (natasha@vaccinateyourfamily.org) for support.

 **ACS CAN Fact Sheet:** [Critical Role of Preventive Services w/o Cost Sharing for Cancer Survivorship](#)

 **ACS CAN Braidwood Update:** [Preserving Access to Preventive Services | American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network](#)

 **Breakthrough T1D USPSTF Campaign:** [USPSTF T1D Early Detection Campaign - Breakthrough T1D](#)

 **Prepare Your Community:** Share educational materials on preventive services and coverage implications.

 **Join the Next Webinar:** Save the date for **December 10, 2025** for our final session in the series: *Hot Topics in Public Health: Community Advocacy in Action*.

***“Preventive services and screening services are really crucial to reducing the number of people who hear those words: you have cancer.”***

**Elizabeth Darnell**  
Senior Director Federal Advocacy  
ACS CAN

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