

Genetics Corner



**U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF)-
Guidelines for Risk Assessment, Genetic Counseling and Genetic Testing Update
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What is the USPSTF?

The USPSTF is an independent panel of non-Federal experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine. The task force is composed of physicians, nurses, and health behavior specialist. It conducts scientific reviews of clinical preventative health care services and makes recommendations for primary care providers and health systems.

What do the USPSTF Recommendations mean?

Services or procedures receive one of the following grades:

- **A**= The service is recommended; there is high certainty that the net benefit is substantial
- **B**= The service is recommended; there is high certainty that the net benefit is moderate to substantial
- **C**= It is recommended that the service be provided selectively
- **D**= The service is recommended against

USPSTF 2013 recommendation update for BRCA risk assessment and genetic counseling and testing:

The USPSTF recommends that primary care providers screen women who have family members with breast, ovarian, tubal or peritoneal cancer with one of several screening tools designed to identify a family history that may be associated with an increased risk for breast cancer susceptibility genes (BRCA1 or BRCA2). Women with positive screening results should receive genetic counseling and BRCA1/2 testing following genetic counseling if indicated. Several screening tools exist, and should not be used as criteria for genetic testing; rather the genetic counselor will determine testing eligibility during the genetic counseling session. The National Comprehensive Cancer Network (NCCN) has guidelines for who should have testing and most insurance companies follow these guidelines.

How does the affordable care act relate to the USPSTF recommendations?

All marketplace plans and many other plans must cover specific preventative services receiving an A or B recommendation from the USPSTF. Patients cannot be charged a copayment or coinsurance for these services. However, these services can go toward patients' annual

deductibles and coverage only applies when an in-network provider has supplied services.

As of 12/2013, these include:

1. Breast Cancer Genetic Test Counseling (BRCA)
2. Breast Cancer Mammography screening every 1 to 2 years for women over 40

Expected outcome of USPSTF recommendation:

This recommendation is expected to identify a greater number of patients who have a hereditary mutation, which will allow them greater opportunity to engage risk management behaviors.

Contact Information:

As always, if you have any questions or would like to refer a patient to UT Southwestern's cancer genetics team in Dallas or in Fort Worth at the Moncrief Cancer Institute, please call (214) 645-2563.