

Sample Newsletter Article on USPSTF Diabetes Screening Guideline

New Diabetes Screening and Prevention Guideline Goes into Effect January 2017

All private health plans must cover free diabetes screening and prevention programs for patients

In October 2015, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) released [updated guidelines](#) on screening for abnormal blood glucose and type 2 diabetes. The USPSTF recommends clinicians screen for abnormal blood glucose (prediabetes) and type 2 diabetes in individuals aged 40 to 70 years old who do not have symptoms of diabetes and are overweight or obese. The USPSTF further recommends clinicians screen patients younger than 40 if they have one or more of the following characteristics:

- family history of diabetes;
- history of gestational diabetes (GDM) or polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS); or
- African American, American Indian or Alaska Native, Asian American, Hispanic or Latino, or Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

In addition, USPSTF recommends clinicians offer or refer patients found to have prediabetes to intensive behavioral counseling interventions to promote a healthful diet and physical activity.

Coverage Implications for Private Insurance

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) requires private health insurers to cover USPSTF recommendations rated “A” or “B” at no cost to patients; the prediabetes/diabetes recommendation received a “B” rating.

Beginning January 2017, health plans are required to cover, at no cost to the patient, screening for prediabetes and diabetes as well as participation in intensive behavioral counseling interventions (i.e. diabetes prevention programs) for individuals screened and determined to have prediabetes.

Key Takeaway

Nearly 3 times more adults are eligible for screening under the new USPSTF recommendation compared to the 2008 version. The new, comprehensive guideline has the potential to detect most cases of undiagnosed prediabetes and diabetes especially in racial and ethnic minorities who are disproportionately impacted by the disease. Access to free screening and diabetes prevention programs has the potential to change the trajectory of the diabetes epidemic in our country and make a positive difference in the lives of millions of people living with diabetes or at risk of developing the disease. For more information, visit www.diabetesadvocacyalliance.org/screening.html.