



MAY 31 2012

Scott Williams
On behalf of the Prostate Cancer Roundtable
P.O. Box 77476
Washington, D.C. 20013

Dear Mr. Williams:

Secretary Sebelius shared your letter with me. Thank you and your colleagues from the Prostate Cancer Roundtable for taking the time to share your concerns about the quality of the evidence on prostate cancer screening and its impact on the recent recommendation of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force).

As you are aware, this Task Force is an independent panel of non-federal, volunteer experts whose focus is prevention. It shares evidence-based recommendations on clinical preventive services to inform and empower America's primary care professionals and the patients and families that they serve. The recommendations provide valuable guidance to the health care community and the American people, and may be used by health plans and the federal government.

The Task Force considered both the Prostate, Lung, Colorectal and Ovarian (PLCO) Cancer Screening Trial and the European Randomized Study of Screening for Prostate Cancer (ERSCP). The Task Force was very much aware of the limitations of both trials and rated both as fair quality. They considered them within the context of the larger body of evidence.

In making the final recommendation, the Task Force considered the best case scenario of the benefits, drawing from the subsample of the ERSCP trial which showed that of 1,000 men screened, only one man would avoid death due to prostate cancer. The Task Force concluded that this small benefit did not outweigh the known harms. You can find the final USPSTF recommendation at <http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/prostatecancerscreening.htm>.

I believe the most important lesson we must all draw from the work of this Task Force is that the men and families of our nation deserve better and more effective screening tests and treatments for prostate cancer. It is my hope that in the future when the medical evidence on screening for prostate cancer is reviewed, the Task Force will find high quality evidence supporting new tests and safer treatments.

Again, thank you for sharing your concerns about prostate cancer screenings. I appreciate the important work that you do to improve the health of American men.

Sincerely,

Carolyn M. Clancy, M.D.
Director