

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 1, 2011

The Honorable Kathleen Sebelius
Secretary
United States Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Sebelius,


Preventive medical screenings keep health care costs low, improve health outcomes, and give patients greater control over their care. We believe that the proposed U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommendation, discouraging prostate cancer screenings for most men, will have serious negative public health consequences.

With early detection, prostate cancer treatment can be relatively routine. According to a study conducted by the American Urological Association, prostate cancer related deaths have declined by 30 percent since the introduction of the Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test. However, prostate cancer can become aggressive and difficult to treat if undetected. The PSA test is a simple, low-cost way to avoid a potentially lethal disease.

The government should never interfere with what a patient and physician agree is in the best interest of the patient. We believe the Task Force's guidelines could initiate a dramatic change to that fundamental relationship. We do not support any entity standing between an individual and doctor when deciding such personal matters.

These recommendations send the wrong message to men about the importance of early detection of prostate cancer. We would like to see a more comprehensive recommendation that encourages men to be active participants in the management of their health and well-being. We look forward to the opportunity to work with you to better inform the public and encourage better public health practices.

Sincerely yours,


GA-12


K-11

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