

Victory for Men's Health; Medicare Will Keep Covering Prostate Cancer Screening

Washington, Jan 20 – (2012)

After Congressmen Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), Dan Burton (R-IN) and Don Young (R-AK) organized a bipartisan group of 44 Members of Congress to object to a recommendation by the United States Preventative Task Force (USPTF) that healthy men should not receive a blood test to screen for prostate cancer, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sibelius agreed to overrule the recommendation.

"This victory preserves the right of doctors to decide, with their patients, whether a PSA test can be used as another indicator of a man's health. It is good for the doctor, the patient and families," said Kucinich.

If accepted, the USPTF recommendation would have eliminated coverage for the blood test for tens of thousands of men over the age of 50 who rely on Medicare coverage.

"One in six men will be diagnosed with the disease during their lifetimes and 30,000 American men still die from it annually. There is substantial evidence which shows that screening helps catch the presence of prostate cancer early," said Kucinich.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, prostate cancer is the most common form of cancer in men in the United States, taking over 29,000 lives in 2007. The disease is especially deadly for three groups: African American men, those with a family history of the disease and men over age 65. The prostate specific antigen test, called P.S.A., is one of two commonly-used methods to screen for it, and early-stage treatment is considered the most effective tool in fighting it.

Kucinich was joined in his campaign for men's health by Representatives Dan Burton (R-IN), Don Young (R-AK), Robert Aderholt (R-AL), Joe Baca (D-CA), Marsha Blackburn (R-TN), Michael Burgess (R-TX), G.K. Butterfield (D-NC), Andre Carson (D-IN), Yvette Clarke (D-NY), William Lacy Clay (D-MO), Steve Cohen (D-TN), Gerald Connolly (D-VA), John Conyers (D-MI), Danny Davis (D-IL), Eliot Engle (D-NY), Michael Fitzpatrick (R-PA), Raul Grijalva (D-AZ), Martin Heinrich (D-NM), Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Tim Holden (D-PA), Eleanor Holmes-Norton (D-DC), Sheila Jackson-Lee (D-TX), Jesse Jackson, Jr. (D-IL), Leonard Lance (R-NJ), Billy Long (R-MO), Michael Michaud (D-ME), James Moran (D-VA), Tim Murphy (R-PA), Randy Neugebauer (R-TX), Donald Payne (D-NJ), Bill Posey (R-FL), David Price (D-NC), Charlie Rangel (D-NY), Silvestre Reyes (D-TX), Laura Richardson (D-CA), Jon Runyan (R-NJ), Bobby Rush (D-IL), David Scott (D-GA), Adam Smith (D-WA), Edolphus Towns (D-NY), Maxine Waters (D-CA), Frank Wolf (R-VA) and John Yarmuth (D-KY).

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