

Community Preventive Services Task Force 2013 Annual Report to Congress and to Agencies Related to the Work of the Task Force

Executive Summary

The [Community Preventive Services Task Force](#) (Task Force) is an independent, non-Federal, uncompensated panel of public health and prevention experts whose mandate is to identify community preventive programs, services, and policies that save American lives and dollars, increase longevity, and improve quality of life. To date, the Task Force has made 228 findings and recommendations about interventions to promote healthful lifestyles, encourage a healthy environment, and help ensure that all Americans have access to early, affordable, and appropriate treatment—all of which are vital to

- Promoting the public's health;
- Reducing disease, disability, and injury;
- Decreasing long-term healthcare costs; and
- Reducing employers' and government costs (e.g., employer-sponsored coverage, Medicare, Medicaid, and other social service programs) related to preventable diseases, disabilities, and injuries.

Task Force recommendations, and the systematic reviews of the evidence on which they are based, are compiled in The Community Guide. These evidence-based recommendations are not mandates for compliance or spending. Instead, they provide information for decision makers and stakeholders wanting to allocate resources effectively to protect and improve people's health; reduce future demand for healthcare spending that is driven by preventable disease and disability; and increase the productivity and competitiveness of the United States (U.S.) workforce.

The intent of this report and future reports to Congress is to feature the efforts of the Task Force related to a topic of high relevance to reducing the burden that preventable disease, injury, and disability places on individuals, families, businesses, communities, and the health system. For this report, cardiovascular disease (CVD)—commonly known as “heart disease and stroke”—is the focal point. CVD is the nation's number one killer of both men and women. The report describes how the Task Force arrives at proven, evidence-based recommendations for ways to strengthen public health efforts to prevent CVD, save lives, and make better use of our health resources. The report additionally highlights where research and program evaluation are needed to fill gaps in the evidence, to further prevent and reduce CVD. The report also summarizes the full list of prevention opportunities reviewed by the Task Force, lists key accomplishments since the last report to Congress, and lays out priorities and plans for coming years.

CVD accounts for one in every four deaths in the U.S. Medications and surgical procedures have been developed to improve the quality and help lengthen the lives of people living with CVD. However, quality of life is usually limited, and treating the disease is extremely expensive. Almost 16% of U.S. annual health expenditures go to treat the 83 million American adults who suffer from CVD. Annual overall costs from CVD are estimated at \$444 billion, which includes the cost of healthcare services, medications, and lost productivity. The greatest promise for reducing CVD-related healthcare costs, pain, and suffering comes from preventing CVD from occurring in the first place, or from controlling it in its earliest stages.

This report discusses Task Force-identified programs, services, and policies that are effective in addressing almost all of the factors that put people at increased risk for CVD. For some CVD risk factors—physical inactivity, tobacco



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use, excessive alcohol consumption, and diabetes—the Task Force has already constructed extensive menus of effective programs, services, and policies. Clinical and public health service providers, communities, and businesses can choose from these menus the options best suited to their settings, populations, and resources. For each of the remaining modifiable CVD risk factors—high blood pressure; high cholesterol levels; diets high in fats, cholesterol, or salt; and obesity—the Task Force has reviewed only a few programs, services, and policies to date. Over the coming years, the Task Force aims to develop comprehensive menus of options to address each of these as well.

A key component of the Task Force’s mandate is to identify gaps in the evidence base related to all of its findings and recommendations. Evidence gaps for the CVD reviews are discussed in this report, and links are provided to evidence gaps for all other Task Force findings and recommendations. Filling these gaps has the potential to make a significant positive impact on public health, health disparities, and healthcare costs. Researchers and program evaluators can develop studies to help fill these gaps. The greatest impact can be seen when funding agencies highlight the evidence gaps as priority areas within their funding announcements, thereby encouraging targeted research and evaluation. The Task Force therefore encourages Congress to continue promoting research and evaluation to address these gaps.

Accomplishments in each area of the Task Force’s mandate are featured in this report. Consistent with plans in the 2012 report, and with scientific and technical support from CDC, accomplishments include:

- Making 11 recommendations on preventing CVD, skin cancer, and motor vehicle-related injuries; reducing excessive alcohol consumption, tobacco use, and secondhand smoke exposure; and improving oral health.
- Increasing efficiencies by developing methods for determining when and how to incorporate existing high-quality systematic reviews completed by others into The Community Guide review process.
- Establishing routine announcement of new and updated Task Force recommendations in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, sent to 177,938 electronic and 5,324 print subscribers.
- Expanding use of the Community Guide website through syndicating content. This places up-to-date Community Guide content on the websites of interested Task Force Liaisons and partners, thereby allowing Community Guide content to be seen by visitors to all the other websites as well.
- Enhancing use of Task Force recommendations through providing training and technical assistance to health organizations and agencies; Task Force Liaisons; and state and local health departments, boards of health, and community-based organizations in 24 states.
- Developing a comprehensive crosswalk tool that helps health departments identify the programs, services, and policies from The Community Guide whose use can help them secure national accreditation by the Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB).
- Completing a comprehensive crosswalk between Healthy People 2020 objectives and all evidence-based interventions from The Community Guide that can help meet those objectives.

Using a process focused on preventing avoidable illness, disability, health care costs, and premature death, the Task Force prioritized the following topics for review during 2013-2015: preventing and managing CVD, cancer, diabetes, and obesity; increasing physical activity; preventing motor vehicle-related injury; reducing tobacco use and disparities in health status; and improving oral health. Task Force plans for 2013-2015 within its mandate are outlined in the report:

- Continuing to expand capacity and balance the production of new reviews with review updates.
- Documenting new stories showing how communities and businesses have used The Community Guide.
- Developing tools and technical assistance to help workplaces use Task Force recommendations.
- Developing technical support to help health departments use The Community Guide–PHAB crosswalk.
- Expanding a) the websites that syndicate Community Guide content, and b) web search capabilities.
- Preparing a curriculum for web-based technical assistance in using Task Force recommendations.
- Strengthening connections with the National Prevention Strategy and Healthy People 2020.
- Consulting with Federal programs about how they can help fill Task Force-identified gaps in evidence.
- Exploring joint dissemination with the US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF).