

# Increasing Cancer Screening: Mass Media Targeting Clients

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## Task Force Finding and Rationale Statement

### Intervention Definition

Mass media—including television, radio, newspapers, magazines, and billboards—are used to communicate educational and motivational information about cancer screening. Mass media can be used alone, but almost always include other components (e.g., client reminders) or attempt to capitalize on existing interventions and infrastructure. This review evaluated the effectiveness of mass media when used alone, or its unique contribution when used as part of a multicomponent intervention to increase screening for breast, cervical and colorectal cancers.

### Task Force Finding (October 2009)

The Community Preventive Services Task Force finds insufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of mass media interventions in increasing screening for breast, cervical and colorectal cancers because too few studies qualified for the review.

### Rationale

The Task Force finding is based on an update of a previous review. The Task Force made no change to its conclusion of insufficient evidence to determine the effectiveness of mass media interventions. This is because, although additional studies were found during the update, there continue to be too few qualifying studies to determine their effectiveness for breast, cervical or colorectal cancer screening. For breast cancer screening, where there had been no qualifying studies in the original review, results from the two studies identified in the update were mixed. For cervical cancer screening, one additional study was identified, resulting in three qualifying studies. Although the effects from all of these studies were in the favorable direction, only one study reported absolute changes in screening, and the effects were modest. For colorectal cancer screening where there had been no qualifying studies in the original review, only one study was identified, and findings were in the negative direction.

Some of the small effect sizes that were reported may have been due to community screening rates being high at baseline. It is unlikely that mass media interventions will have a meaningful impact on screening when baseline rates are high, due to ceiling effects and the expectation that mass media interventions would have a limited ability to address unresolved barriers among those who remain unscreened.

### Publications

Sabatino SA, Lawrence B, Elder R, Mercer SL, Wilson KM, DeVinney B, Melillo S, Carvalho M, Taplin S, Bastani R, Rimer BK, Vernon SW, Melvin CL, Taylor V, Fernandez M, Glanz K, Community Preventive Services Task Force. Effectiveness of interventions to increase screening for breast, cervical, and colorectal cancers: nine updated systematic reviews for The Guide to Community Preventive Services. *Am J Prev Med* 2012;43(1):765-86.

Community Preventive Services Task Force. Updated recommendations for client- and provider-oriented interventions to increase breast, cervical, and colorectal cancer screening. *Am J Prev Med* 2012;43(1):760-4.

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### Disclaimer

The findings and conclusions on this page are those of the Community Preventive Services Task Force and do not necessarily represent those of CDC. Task Force evidence-based recommendations are not mandates for compliance or spending. Instead, they provide information and options for decision makers and stakeholders to consider when determining which programs, services, and

policies best meet the needs, preferences, available resources, and constraints of their constituents.  
Document last updated September 25, 2013