An Open Letter in Support of Expanded Lung Cancer Screening Recommendation
May 2021

We write in support of the March 2021 update to the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) lung cancer screening recommendation.

Lung cancer is the nation’s leading cancer killer in the United States. An estimated 235,760 new cases are expected to be diagnosed in 2021, and 131,880 people are expected to lose their lives. We strongly support lung cancer screening for high-risk populations because we know that early detection improves the chances of survival. Screening is essential to saving lives, particularly because lung cancer is typically found in the later stages and has an overall 5-year survival rate of just 21.8%.

The updated USPSTF recommendation expands the current guidelines to include individuals ages 50 to 80 years who have a 20 pack-year smoking history and currently smoke or have quit within the past 15 years. This recommendation will nearly double the number of individuals eligible for screening and has the potential to save significantly more lives than the current guidelines.

The updated USPSTF recommendation is also an important step forward in addressing racial disparities associated with lung cancer. The expanded criteria will more than double the number of Black and Hispanic people eligible for screening and increase the number of American Indians and Alaskan Natives eligible almost three-fold.

Under the Affordable Care Act, most private insurance plans will need to update their policies to cover screening without cost-sharing for individuals newly eligible under the new guidelines for plan years beginning March 31, 2022. We call on all policymakers to consider updating their coverage guidelines to align with these updated recommendations as soon as possible and remove any financial or other barriers to screening so that all people at high risk for lung cancer can access this lifesaving preventive service.

Sincerely,

American Lung Association
The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American Academy of Family Physicians
American College of Chest Physicians (CHEST)
American College of Radiology
American Thoracic Society
American Association for Cancer Research
National Association of Chronic Disease Directors
Oncology Nursing Society
Public Health Law Center
Truth Initiative
A Breath of Hope Lung Foundation  
Adagio Health  
Advent Health Waterman  
Al-Con Counseling, Inc.  
ALK Positive Support Group  
American Lung Cancer Screening Initiative  
Association of American Cancer Institutes  
Baptist Cancer Center  
Baptist MD Anderson Cancer Center  
Beaumont Health  
Blackfeet Tobacco Use Prevention Program  
Breathe Easy, Grant County  
Breathe Southern California  
Brigham and Women’s Hospital  
Brigham Health  
Cancer Support Community  
Caring Ambassadors Program, Inc.  
Carolina Services of North Carolina, LLC  
CentraCare  
Citizens for Radioactive Radon Reduction  
City of Hope  
Clifton F. Mountain Foundation for Education & Research in Lung Cancer  
Dignity Health - St. Joseph’s Medical Center  
Dignity Health Mercy Medical Center Merced  
Duke Cancer Institute  
DuPage Medical Group  
Dusty Joy Foundation (LiveLung)  
Henry Ford Health System  
Hillsdale Hospital  
ICAN, International Cancer Advocacy Network  
Indiana University Health Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center  
Inova Schar Cancer Institute  
Kaiser Permanente Colorado  
Kindred Healthcare  
Korman Respiratory Institute at Thomas Jefferson University  
KRAS Kickers  
LifeLong Medical Care  
Luminis Health Anne Arundel Medical Center  
Lung Cancer Circle of Hope  
Lung Cancer Connection  
Lung Cancer Foundation of America  
Lung Cancer Initiative  
Lung Cancer Research Foundation  
Maine Lung Cancer Coalition  
Mary Bird Perkins-Our Lady of the Lake Cancer Center  
Mass General Brigham  
Massachusetts General Hospital  
Mercy Health Mclees Clinic  
MET Crusaders Cancer Advocacy Group  
Metropolitan YMCAs of Mississippi  
MeVis Medical Solutions AG  
MidMichigan Health  
Missouri Academy of Family Physicians  
Norton Pulmonary Specialists  
Oklahoma Hospital Association  
Paoli Hospital  
Patient Advocate Foundation and SelfMade Health Network  
Primary Care Collaborative  
ProMedica Cancer Institute  
Respiratory Health Association  
Rush University System for Health  
Saint Alphonsus RMC  
Saint Joseph Mercy Health System  
Siteman Cancer Center  
Smoking Cessation Leadership Center  
Society for Public Health Education  
Society of Thoracic Radiology  
The Fleischner Society  
The University of Kansas Cancer Center  
Tobacco Free Alliance of Virginia  
University of Kansas Cancer Center  
University of Louisville School of Medicine  
University of Michigan Rogel Cancer Center  
University of Minnesota Health Fairview  
University of Virginia Cancer Center  
University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention  
Upstage Lung Cancer.org  
Vanderbilt-Ingram Cancer Center  
VCU Massey Cancer Center  
WVU Cancer Institute