

PLEASE SUPPORT EXTENSION OF THE PALS ACT TO PROTECT BREAST CANCER SCREENING FOR WOMEN STARTING AT AGE 40!

Background

In October 2015, during Breast Cancer Awareness Month, the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) finalized new breast cancer screening guidelines that would limit access to mammography for millions of women ages 40 to 49, by telling women to wait until age 50 to begin screening. This was a significant departure for breast cancer screening guidelines and leading clinical organizations for women's health—including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, the National Comprehensive Cancer Network, the American Medical Association, and the American College of Radiology/Society for Breast Imaging— that all restated their recommendation that breast cancer screening start at age 40. Breast cancer patient groups joined these clinical organizations in expressing opposition and urged Congress to support the Protecting Access to Lifesaving Screenings Act (PALS) Act by placing a moratorium on the implementation of the USPSTF breast cancer screening guideline change. The initial moratorium was included in the FY2016 Omnibus and was extended through December 31, 2018. **If not extended, the USPSTF guidelines will raise the mammography age to 50 starting with the January 2019 insurance cycle.**

What's Important

Mammography is a critical tool in the fight against breast cancer. However, the USPSTF guidelines would limit access to this lifesaving exam for millions of women.

- Survival rates are worse in women under 50 when compared to those in older women so preventive breast cancer screening becomes especially important. Insurance companies will no longer be required to cover screenings without cost-sharing for 22 million women ages 40-49. Insurance companies will only be required to cover mammograms without cost-sharing for women 50-74 every other year
- Because the evidence regarding 3D mammography will be deemed as insufficient, insurance companies will no longer be required to cover this superior exam without cost-sharing, despite hundreds of studies showing that 3D mammography addresses many challenges with conventional mammography noted by the USPSTF (i.e. finding more invasive cancers with fewer false positives).

✓ THE ASK

Please extend the current USPSTF breast screening moratorium – the PALS Act – through 2021. The 3-year extension is important because it allows insurers sufficient time to plan in advance. The PALS Act supports efforts to bring greater transparency and improved women's health representation to the Task Force and revise the public comment process. It is our hope that the moratorium will also provide adequate time to address these modifications to the USPSTF process.

PALS Act Supporters

Prevent Cancer Foundation, National Association of Nurse Practitioners in Women's Health, Bright Pink, National Hispanic Medical Association, National Medical Association, FORCE: Facing Our Risk of Cancer Empowered, Men Against Breast Cancer Fund, Oncology Nursing Society, National Patient Advocate Foundation, Tigerlily Foundation, National Black Nurses Association, National Consortium of Breast Centers, Black Women's Health Imperative, Living Beyond Breast Cancer, American College of Radiology, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and Sharsheret