A Purchaser’s Guide to Clinical Preventive Services: Moving Science into Coverage

Overview of a Purchaser’s Guide to Clinical Preventive Services

A Purchaser’s Guide to Clinical Preventive Services: Moving Science into Coverage (Purchaser’s Guide) is an information source for employers on clinical preventive service benefit design. This document provides guidance for the selection of clinical preventive services shown to be effective by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other authoritative organizations.


The Purchaser’s Guide provides several new and important components that will assist employers in improving coverage for clinical preventive services. Namely, the Purchaser’s Guide includes the scientific evidence and detailed benefit language employers need to implement comprehensive and structured clinical preventive service benefits.

Below is an annotated table of contents that describes the information, resources, and tools provided in each part of the Purchaser’s Guide.

Introduction
Provides an overview of how the Purchaser’s Guide was developed and background on the sources of its recommendations.

Part I: The Role of Clinical Preventive Services in Disease Prevention and Early Detection
Provides information for employers on improving beneficiary health and reducing healthcare costs through the implementation of comprehensive and structured clinical preventive service benefits within a medical benefit plan.

In order to protect and promote beneficiary health and control healthcare costs, employers must provide coverage for clinical preventive services.

Within a given benefit plan, employers may select which preventive services are covered and at what level. Many preventive services are available. Some are known to be effective; others are known to be relatively ineffective or even harmful; others may be effective but the proof of effectiveness is weak. The Purchaser’s Guide provides guidance for the selection of clinical preventive services proven to be clinically effective and of value to employers.
Part II: Summary Plan Description (SPD) Language Statements for Recommended Clinical Preventive Service Benefits

Provides 46 condition specific summary plan description (SPD) language statements designed to assist benefits staff as they design benefit structures, discuss clinical preventive services with a healthcare consultant, set coverage guidelines with a health plan, or negotiate covered services with a union or consumer group. The SPD language statements were adapted from recommendations of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other authoritative organizations.

Each preventive service SPD statement contains detailed benefit language regarding the:

- Necessary content of the recommended clinical preventive service.
- Age at which the service should be initiated and ceased.
- Recommended frequency of the service.

Applicable current procedural terminology (CPT) codes are provided for employers and health plans to facilitate the implementation and reimbursement of clinical preventive service benefits.

Part III: Evidence-Statements for Recommended Clinical Preventive Service Benefits

Provides evidence-statements for each of the 46 recommended clinical preventive service benefits. Each evidence-statement includes information about the:

- Prevalence and/or incidence of the condition.
- Risk factors associated with the condition.
- Economic burden of the condition and the economic benefit of early identification/intervention.
- Cost-benefit/cost-effectiveness of the recommended intervention.
- Cost of the recommended preventive intervention.
- Purpose of the preventive intervention.
- Benefits and risks of the preventive intervention.

Part IV: The Prioritization and Strategic Implementation of Clinical Preventive Service Benefits

Provides practical “how-to” information on the development and implementation of structured clinical preventive service benefits. Real-world examples of each prioritization method are provided.

Part V: I Statements and C and D Recommendations and of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF)

Provides information on clinical preventive services that were reviewed by the USPSTF, but were not included in the Purchaser’s Guide because the USPSTF:

1. Found that there was insufficient evidence to make a recommendation either for or against providing the service (I statement);
2. Made no recommendation regarding the provision of the service based on an analysis of evidence of effectiveness, benefits, and harms (C recommendation); or
3. Recommended against routine provision of the service for asymptomatic patients based on an analysis of the evidence of effectiveness, benefits, and harms (D recommendation).

This information may assist benefits staff in determining which clinical preventive services currently offered in their health plan(s) should be re-evaluated and, possibly, eliminated.

**Part VI: Leveraging Benefits: Opportunities to Promote the Delivery and Use of Preventive Services**

The Purchaser’s Guide is designed to help employers select and implement clinical preventive services that are delivered by healthcare providers. Employers can strengthen prevention efforts by supporting public health interventions that may occur in the workplace or communities. Part VI provides information and tips for employers on promoting the delivery and use of clinical and community-based preventive services, including:

- A crosswalk between the recommendations proposed in the Purchaser’s Guide and the Community Guide.
- Case examples of large employers who have successfully implemented worksite health promotion programs and/or supported community-based interventions.

**Part VII: Resources & Tools**

Provides additional information and resources on clinical preventive service benefit design, including:

- The Life Course Charts — visual guides to clinical preventive services across the lifespan
  - Recommended Schedule of Preventive Care for Adults
  - Recommended Schedule of Preventive Care for Children and Adolescents
  - Recommended Schedule of Preventive Preconception, Prenatal, and Postpartum Care
- A crosswalk between the Purchaser’s Guide, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force’s A/B recommendations, the 2007 HEDIS® Measures, the NCQA State of Healthcare Quality Report, and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Service’s Healthy People 2010 Goals.
- Clinical Preventive Services Glossary
- Links to additional resources and cost-calculators.
- A CD containing PDF versions of all the materials included in the Purchaser’s Guide.
An Introduction to A Purchaser’s Guide to Clinical Preventive Services

Clinical Preventive Service Topic Selection

The clinical preventive services recommended for coverage in the Purchaser’s Guide were selected by the National Business Group on Health with the technical assistance of experts from two federal agencies, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ).

The Purchaser’s Guide coverage recommendations are mainly based on the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommendations on clinical preventive services for the general asymptomatic population. The USPSTF, sponsored by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) (part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), is an independent panel of experts in primary care and prevention that makes recommendations regarding clinical preventive services after a careful review of the scientific literature. The Purchaser’s Guide includes all of the USPSTF “A” and “B”-rated recommendations published before March 2006.

Recommendations from sources other than the USPSTF were added to support USPSTF recommendations, or inserted in place of a USPSTF recommendation, when:

1. No current USPSTF recommendation was available (e.g., screening for elevated blood lead levels); or
2. When a newer recommendation superseded the existing USPSTF recommendation (e.g., lipids screening).

In order to be included in the Purchaser’s Guide, clinical preventive service recommendations were required to meet the following criteria:

1. Be based on medical evidence or recommended guidance.
2. Address a serious health threat in terms of morbidity (illness), mortality (death), or quality of life (including risk of disability).
3. Address a condition that results in substantial direct (e.g., treatment costs) or indirect costs (e.g., absenteeism, lost productivity) for payers.
Forty-six (46) services met the inclusion criteria outlined on the previous page. These services are discussed in further detail in Part II: Summary Plan Description (SPD) Language Statements for Recommended Clinical Preventive Service Benefits and Part III: Evidence Statements for Recommended Clinical Preventive Service Benefits.

The evidence for clinical preventive services is growing. Purchasers are encouraged to periodically check the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) website (www.ahrq.gov/clinic/uspstfix.htm) for up-to-date recommendations on clinical preventive services.

**Figure A: Sources of Information Used in the Purchaser’s Guide**

- Advisory Committee on Childhood Lead Poisoning Prevention (ACCLP)
- Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)
- Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ)
- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)
- Alliance for Cervical Cancer Prevention; Program for the Appropriate use of Technology in Health (PATH)
- American Academy of Audiology
- American Academy of Bariatric Surgery
- American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)
- American Academy of Neurology
- American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD)
- American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP)
- American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists (AACE)
- American Cancer Society (ACS)
- American College of Cardiology
- American College of Emergency Physicians (ACEP)
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG)
- American College of Preventive Medicine (ACPM)
- American College of Surgeons (ACS)
- American Dental Association (ADA)
- American Diabetes Association (ADA)
- American Heart Association (AHA)
- American Medical Association (AMA)
- American Psychological Association (APA)
- American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM)
- American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO)
- American Speech, Language, and Hearing Association
- Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Committee on Educational Interventions for Children with Autism, National Research Council, National Academies
- Directors of Speech and Hearing Programs in State Health and Welfare Agencies
- Employee Benefits Institute
- Food and Drug Administration (FDA)
- George Washington University, Center for Health Services Research and Policy
- Harvard Medical School
Figure A: Sources of Information Used in the Purchaser’s Guide (Continued)

- Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
- Healthy People 2010, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- Institute of Medicine (IOM)
- Internal Revenue Service (IRS), Department of Treasury
- International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)
- Jacobs Institute of Women’s Health (JIWH)
- Joint Committee on Infant Hearing (JCIH)
- Joint National Committee on Prevention, Detection, Evaluation, and Treatment of High Blood Pressure
- March of Dimes
- Maternal Child Health Bureau (MCHB)
- National Academy of Sciences (NAS)
- National Academy of Sciences, Institute of Medicine (IOM)
- National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners (NAPNAP)
- National Business Group on Health
- National Cancer Institute (NCI)
- National Center for Education in Maternal and Child Health
- National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)
- National Center for Hearing Assessment and Management (NCHAM)
- National Center for Injury Prevention and Control
- National Cholesterol Education Program (NCEP)
- National Cholesterol Education Program Adult Treatment Expert Panel-III
- National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES)
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI)
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
- National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)
- National Institutes of Health (NIH)
- National Institutes of Mental Health (NIMH)
- National March of Dimes Birth Defects Foundation
- National Osteoporosis Foundation (NOF)
- National Research Council, Committee on Educational Interventions for Children with Autism, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education
- Partnership for Prevention
- Peer-reviewed research
- Preeclampsia Foundation
- Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (USDHHS)
- U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF)
- U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS)
- U.S. Surgeon General
- World Health Organization (WHO)
The Evidence for Clinical Preventive Services

All of the recommendations in the Purchaser's Guide are based on science.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF)

Most of the recommendations featured in the Purchaser's Guide were adapted from the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF). The USPSTF is recognized as the gold-standard in clinical preventive service recommendations; it is an independent panel of experts in primary care and prevention that conducts rigorous, impartial assessments of the scientific evidence for the effectiveness of clinical preventive services.¹

The USPSTF is mandated by Congress to evaluate preventive services and publishes recommendations and evidence synthesis, which are the culmination of an extensive literature review, debate, and analysis of critical comments from expert reviewers.¹ USPSTF recommendations are based on an objective process that weighs the benefits and the harms of a preventive service. Each recommendation is given a letter grade (A-D, I) based on the strength of evidence available to support the particular clinical preventive service and the magnitude of net benefit for that service. The net benefit of a clinical preventive service is defined as the benefits of the service (e.g., years of life saved through early cancer detection) minus the harms of the service (e.g., risks associated with false-positive test results).

By definition, the foundational source of USPSTF recommendations is research published in peer review journals. USPSTF recommendations are therefore limited to clinical preventive services that have been systematically studied and published. Services that are commonly provided in clinical practice but have not been well-studied or have been poorly documented in the literature may not be reviewed. For instance, some interventions have not been systematically studied due to ethical concerns (e.g., withholding treatment) or lack of funding for research. In other cases, evidence exists but it is conflicting. These interventions are given an “I” rating (“I” for insufficient evidence) by the USPSTF.

Evidence-Based Recommendations, Evidence-Based Medicine, and Evidence-Based Benefits

Many of the clinical preventive service recommendations presented in the Purchaser's Guide are evidence-based. Evidence-based services have a longer and stronger base of research to support their efficacy, safety, and cost-effectiveness. Generally, the term “evidence-based” refers to medical interventions that scientific studies have evaluated and determined to be effective and to have a measurable effect on health outcomes.
To make the sources, types, and strength of scientific evidence used in the Purchaser’s Guide fully transparent, each evidence-statement featured in Part III: Evidence-Statements for Recommended Clinical Preventive Service Benefits contains an evidence-box as a summary.

Each evidence-box contains the following information:

- A description of where the information used in the recommendation originated from (e.g., the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), CDC, or the USPSTF).

There is strong scientific evidence to support the provision of a broad range of clinical preventive services for normal-risk children, adolescents, and adults.
The level of evidence used in constructing the recommendation:
  > Evidence-based research
  > Recommended guidance

The strength of the evidence. For example, the USPSTF grades each of its clinical preventive service recommendations on a 5-point scale (A-D, I). The grade is determined by the strength of scientific evidence supporting a clinical preventive service and the magnitude of net benefit (defined as benefits minus harms).4

Figure C: Sample Evidence-Boxes

Strength of Evidence for the Clinical Preventive Service
(Colorectal Cancer Screening)
The level of evidence supporting the recommendations contained in this chapter is described below.

Evidence-Based Research:
U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF)
Strength of Evidence: A (Strongly Recommended/Good Evidence)
• The USPSTF found fair to good evidence that several screening methods are effective in reducing mortality from colorectal cancer. The USPSTF concluded that the benefits from screening substantially outweigh potential harms, but the quality of evidence, magnitude of benefit, and potential harms vary with each method.

Strength of Evidence for the Clinical Preventive Service
(Immunizations)
The level of evidence supporting the recommendations contained in this chapter is described below.

Recommended Guidance:
Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Strength of Evidence: Expert Consensus
• The ACIP and CDC recommend that all children and adolescents with no contraindications receive all routinely recommended childhood vaccinations. Children and adolescents who fall into high-risk groups because of health conditions, behaviors, or membership in certain communities should receive additional immunizations.

• The ACIP and CDC recommend that all adults with no contraindications receive three routinely recommended vaccines (age-dependent). Adults who fall into high-risk groups because of health conditions, behaviors or exposures, as well as those without a history of immunization for certain diseases, should receive additional immunizations.
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Figure D: U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) Strength of Evidence Scale

A Strongly Recommended
The USPSTF strongly recommends that clinicians provide the service to eligible patients. The USPSTF found good evidence that the service improves important health outcomes and concludes that the benefits substantially outweigh harms.

B Recommended
The USPSTF recommends that clinicians provide the service to eligible patients. The USPSTF found at least fair evidence that the service improves important health outcomes and concludes that the benefits outweigh harms.

C No Recommendation Either For or Against
The USPSTF makes no recommendation either for or against routine provision of the service. The USPSTF found at least fair evidence that the service can improve health outcomes but concludes that the balance of benefits and harms is too close to justify a general recommendation.

D Recommend Against
The USPSTF recommends against routinely providing the service to asymptomatic patients. The USPSTF found at least fair evidence that the service is ineffective or that the harms associated with the service outweigh benefits.

I Insufficient Evidence in Order to Make a Recommendation
The USPSTF concludes that the evidence is insufficient to recommend for or against routinely providing the service. Evidence that the service is effective is lacking, of poor quality, or conflicting, and the balance of benefits and harms cannot be determined.

Figure E: American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Strength of Evidence Scale

SR Strongly Recommended
Good quality evidence exists which demonstrates substantial net benefit over harm; the intervention is perceived to be cost-effective and acceptable to nearly all patients.

R Recommended
Although evidence exists which demonstrates net benefit, either the benefit is only moderate in magnitude or the evidence supporting a substantial benefit is only fair. The intervention is perceived to be cost-effective and acceptable to most patients.

NR No Recommendation Either Either For or Against
Either good or fair evidence exist of at least a small net benefit. Cost-effectiveness may not be known or patients may be divided about acceptability of the intervention.

RA Recommend Against
Good or fair evidence exist which demonstrates no net benefit over harm.

I Insufficient Evidence to Recommend Either For or Against
No evidence of even fair quality exists or the existing evidence is conflicting.

IHB Healthy behavior is identified as desirable, but the effectiveness of physician's advice and counseling is uncertain.
References:


