

PSA Screening

Response to USPSTF Final "D" rating of PSA screening

May 22, 2012

We are deeply disappointed in the damage that the USPSTF has done with respect to the public understanding of the role, risks, and benefits of PSA testing. Much of the reporting in the lay press with respect to the announcement includes data sighted by members of the USPSTF that is wildly inaccurate and misleading. It remains unclear whether or not Congress will now instruct CMS (Medicare) to stop covering the PSA blood test as a screening exam.

We continue to advocate for the *proper* use of the PSA test to screen for prostate cancer which includes evaluating a man's overall risk based on age, race, family history, and other illnesses that may be present. After a discussion of the potential benefits and also weaknesses of the test, properly selected and informed men should continue have the choice to be screened.

Prostate cancer continues to be the second leading cause of cancer death in men and the death rate from prostate cancer has dropped 40% in the past 10 years because of early detection with the PSA blood test. Both the detection of prostate cancer by trans-rectal biopsy and the variety of treatment options for prostate cancer contain risks of side effects. Not all men with biopsy-proven prostate cancer require treatment. Men deserve to have the option of screening for prostate cancer with PSA and to a detailed discussion with their doctor with respect to the complicated decisions to be made at each step in the process from screening, to biopsy, to observation or treatment.

We will continue to advocate on behalf of our patients , indeed on behalf of all men, to remedy this issue.