
 **AAFP News: AAFP Edition***Policy and Health Issues in the News***AAFP: Don't Add Subspecialists to USPSTF**

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) is urging Congress not to mandate the addition of subspecialist physicians and industry representatives to a federal task force that was established to offer preventive guidance to primary care physicians. AAFP President John Meigs, MD, recently testified against a proposed bill that would expand the membership of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF), which makes evidence-based recommendations that primary care physicians use when advising patients about the need for preventive care screenings or services. "Primary care physicians, due to the diversity and complexity of the patients we care for, are uniquely situated to provide a comprehensive and whole-person perspective to the task force, as compared to physicians and clinicians who care for a single disease process or organ system," Meigs testified. "This process works best when the participating physicians and scientists, as well as the entity itself, are insulated from commercial and political pressures." Subspecialists and the organizations they represent already contribute to the task force's mission by nominating topics for consideration and assisting with development of research plans. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/government-medicine/20161205meigsuspstf.html>.

Surgeon General Issues Report on Drugs

One in seven people in the United States will develop a substance use disorder at some point in their lifetime, yet only 10% of them will receive treatment. To bridge this gap, U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, MD, MBA, recently released the office's first report dedicated to substance misuse and related disorders: "Facing Addiction in America: The Surgeon General's Report on Alcohol, Drugs and Health." The report covers alcohol and illicit and prescription drug misuse and includes chapters on neurobiology, prevention, treatment, recovery, health systems integration, and recommendations for the future. The resource's in-depth look at the science of substance use disorders and addiction aims to support a move away from the current social stigma associated with substance misuse. In 2015, nearly 48 million Americans used an illicit drug or misused a prescription medication, about 67 million reported binge drinking within the past month, and nearly 28 million self-reported driving under the influence within the past year. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/health-of-the-public/20161122sgreportdrugs.html>.

Changes on the Way for Next Spring's ABFM Examination

Family physicians learned last year about a number of changes the American Board of Family Medicine (ABFM) was making to its Family Medicine Certification process, such as the decision to uncouple the clinical simulation portion of the self-assessment activities from the knowledge assessment portion. The move, which was based on feedback from ABFM diplomates, means that rather than requiring diplomates to complete an activity that includes a 60-question knowledge assessment plus a clinical simulation, the knowledge self-assessment will now be the minimum required self-assessment activity. The board recently announced additional modifications it will be making to the certification process, this time to the Family Medicine Certification examination that forms the cognitive expertise component of certification. Beginning with the April 2017 administration of the certification examination, the modular portion will change from a two-module to a single-module format. Candidates will choose from among the eight content-specific modules currently available, each of which includes 40 multiple-choice questions. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/education-professional-development/20161122abfmexamchanges.html>.

Campaign Helps Physicians Focus on Obesity

To bolster the battle against obesity, the partners behind National Obesity Care Week created the Take 5 Challenge, which encourages health care professionals to take five minutes to learn more about obesity and how to best engage with patients to discuss their weight. Developed by The Obesity Society, the Obesity Action Coalition, the Strategies to Overcome and Prevent Obesity Alliance, and the American Society for Metabolic and Bariatric Surgery, the Take 5 Challenge provides resources to address obesity, including key reasons to discuss weight, starter questions to help physicians and other health care professionals engage in productive patient conversations, and referral options for obesity subspecialists. For more information, go to <http://www.aafp.org/news/health-of-the-public/20161121take5challenge.html>.

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