



December 21, 2016

The Honorable Sylvia Matthews Burwell
Secretary, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Thomas E. Perez
Secretary, U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20210

The Honorable Jacob J. Lew
Secretary, U.S. Department of the Treasury
1500 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20220

Dear Secretary Matthew, Secretary Perez and Secretary Lew:

On behalf of the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), which represents 124,900 family physicians and medical students across the country, I write in response to the [frequently asked questions document](#) (FAQ) regarding coverage of tobacco cessation interventions. Unfortunately, instead of the FAQ clarifying which items and services insurers must cover without cost sharing in order to comply with the updated U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) tobacco cessation recommendation issued in September 2015, the Departments request comments from stakeholders before providing future guidance. The AAFP urges the Departments to promptly issue a new FAQ on tobacco cessation benefits with updated USPSTF recommendations.

The *Affordable Care Act* (ACA) has helped the nation make great strides in focusing healthcare delivery on preventing diseases in addition to merely treating them. The requirement that all non-grandfathered private health insurance plans cover preventive services given an 'A' or 'B' rating by the USPSTF is a key driver of this shift in emphasis.

Helping smokers quit is one of the most impactful ways to reduce preventable disease. The AAFP supports tobacco cessation coverage because America's family physicians are at the frontline in the battle to treat tobacco dependence as well as depression and other mental health disorders. Approximately 70% of people who use tobacco products see a physician each year, so family physicians have the opportunity to make a significant impact on patients' tobacco use, including those who suffer from behavioral health disorders.

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Further, tobacco-related disparities persist within high-risk populations. Addressing health equity and social determinants of health are a high priority for the AAFP. We advocate for insurance coverage with no cost sharing, including under Medicaid coverage, for evidence-based cessation tools, counseling, and both prescriptions and over-the-counter tobacco cessation medications.

The AAFP urges that a new FAQ be issued as soon as possible so that millions of American smokers have access to tobacco cessation treatments as outlined by the USPSTF.

For any questions you might have, please contact Bellinda Schoof, MHA, CPHQ, Division Director of Health of the Public and Science at 800-274-2237, extension 3160 or bschoof@aafp.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Wanda D. Filer, MD".

Wanda D. Filer, MD, MBA, FAAFP
Board Chair