

October 25, 2017

USPSTF Senior Project Coordinator
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Attention: Draft Research Plan for Asymptomatic Bacteriuria in Adults: Screening

Dear Chairperson Grossman, Vice-Chairpersons Curry and Owens, and members of the task force,

On behalf of the National Association of City and County Health Officials (NACCHO), I am writing to provide comment on the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) Draft Research Plan for Asymptomatic Bacteriuria (ASB) in Adults: Screening. NACCHO is the voice for nearly 3,000 local health departments across the country. These city, county, metropolitan, district, and tribal departments work every day to protect and promote health and well-being for all people in their communities. In response to the draft research plan, NACCHO offers recommendations and comments pertaining to the areas of infection prevention and control and antibiotic stewardship.

Antibiotic resistance poses a known and growing threat. Specifically, at least two million people each year in the U.S. are infected with antibiotic resistant bacteria and an estimated 23,000 deaths occur from these infections.¹ This problem is only exacerbated by inappropriate prescribing behaviors; at least 30% of antibiotics prescribed in the U.S. are unnecessary.² Given that urinary tract infections (UTIs) are common among hospitalized patients, “a significant portion of overall antimicrobial use in hospitals is for the treatment of UTIs”.³ This is also particularly important in the long term care facility setting where ASB prevalence can be as high as 50% in non-catheterized residents and 100% among those with long-term urinary catheters.⁴ In this context, clear clinical guidelines based on strong scientific evidence are necessary to strengthen antibiotic stewardship efforts and ensure that antibiotics are used only when the benefit outweighs the harm of potential development of resistance. As such, NACCHO appreciates USPSTF efforts to further understand how screening for ASB can impact health outcomes and urges that the considered harms in this study include the development of antibiotic resistance and that the lens of antibiotic stewardship is strongly considered to reflect both individual and society level harms.

The Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA) guidelines for screening and treatment of ASB are based on a thorough review of the existing literature. These guidelines highlight that both screening and treatment should be discouraged in adult populations except pregnant women and patients who undergo traumatic urologic interventions with mucosal bleeding because there is no evidence of improved outcomes in other populations.⁵ USPSTF recommendations mirror those from IDSA, and further evidence to strengthen and clarify the screening recommendations for pregnant women, particularly related to frequency and timing, could serve to improve maternal and fetal health outcomes. While strengthening the evidence base and clarifying guidelines could help to improve patient outcomes, studies have shown that providers frequently do not follow the existing guidelines

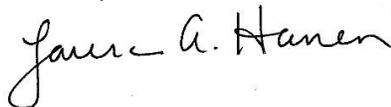


and regularly over-screen and over-treat ASB.⁶ Furthermore, interventions to improve these behaviors require more intensive stewardship activities than simply didactic teaching or distribution of guidelines.⁶

Local health departments across the United States are responding to antimicrobial resistance and promoting stewardship. They collect and analyze data to identify outbreaks, investigate reportable diseases, and prevent the spread of infections in community and healthcare settings. Local health departments can facilitate coordination among agencies to improve antimicrobial stewardship and prevent the spread of antimicrobial-resistant organisms, particularly given the growing understanding that coordination between facilities will have greater impact on preventing antimicrobial resistance than independent, individual facility efforts.⁷

Given the growing role of local health departments in combatting antimicrobial resistance, NACCHO commends USPSTF in taking steps to strengthen the evidence base for ASB screening and treatment and urges that this research be done through the lens of antibiotic stewardship. If you have any questions, please contact Michelle Cantu, NACCHO Director for Infectious Disease and Immunization, at 202-507-4251 or mcantu@naccho.org.

Sincerely,



Laura A. Hanen, MPP
Interim Executive Director/Chief of Government Affairs

References

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