

Senate HELP Committee to Investigate USPSTF Mammography Recommendations

Chairman Tom Harkin, D-IA, of the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee has announced that it will hold a hearing on the recent U.S. Preventative Services Task Force recommendations against mammography screening for women 40-49 (other than high-risk women), annual screening for women 50-74 (in favor of screening every other year), and any breast cancer screening for those over 74. The government funded USPSTF, which is part of the Department of Health and Human Services, includes representatives from health insurers, but not a single expert in mammography or oncology. Aides to Harkin said that plans are in the works to schedule a hearing sometime in the near future.

The ACR is urging HELP Committee members that a representative from the College testify at the hearing regarding the scientific shortcomings of the new recommendations and their devastating effect on cancer care in the United States. On Tuesday, 22 members of the Senate wrote a bipartisan [letter](#) to HELP Chairman [Harkin](#) asking that the committee look into the situation and try to dispel the confusion that has ensued.

"These recommendations, which have been widely criticized by patients and doctors alike, could prove devastating for women at risk of breast cancer," the senators wrote. "The American people deserve to know more about how this task force came to its controversial findings."

The American Cancer Society and the American College of Radiology continue to advise that women age 40 and older receive mammograms annually to screen for breast cancer.

[Click here](#) to read the Senate HELP letter.