Cancer Detection Tool Saves Lives

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CAMP HILL, Pa., Oct. 12, 2011 /PRNewswire/ -- Urologists for Patient Access to Care (UPAC) today called a federal government report recommending that healthy men should no longer receive prostate-specific antigen (PSA) blood tests as a part of routine cancer screening "a major retrenchment in preventive health care."

Dr. Scott Owens of Camp Hill, urged patients and preventive health care advocates to speak out to preserve prostate cancer screenings and set aside last week's U.S. Preventive Services Task Force recommending an end to routine PSA tests.

"This decision is being made by a panel that does not include urologists or oncologists," said Owens, practicing with a large Central PA urology group practice. "No new research was cited by the panel, which last considered PSA testing in 2009."

The Central Pennsylvania doctor noted that recent studies have found that deaths from prostate cancer dropped 44 percent among screened men over a 14-year period, when compared with unscreened men, and found screening efficiency for prostate cancer similar to other cancers.

"PSAs are safe, non-invasive, painless, low in cost and they save lives," Owens said. "In the current climate of rising health care costs, we should be looking for more preventive health practices like PSAs, not discouraging them."

This same task force suggested mammograms were unnecessary for women ages 40-49 and recommended against teaching women breast self-exams, which was soundly rejected by Congress after public outcry. "If Congress hears a comparable ground swell of public opposition on this wrong-headed proposal, we can preserve greater access to preventive health care for men, too," the urologist said.

By not performing routine PSAs, we as clinicians may be jeopardizing the health of men who are most at risk: those who are underinsured, live in rural areas (where health care is not readily available), have a family history of
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