



Memorandum

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From: Nikki S. Hayes, MPH
Branch Chief, Comprehensive Cancer Control Branch
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion

Subject: Lung Cancer Screening Letter

To: NCCCCP Program Managers

Dear Colleagues,

Given the recent national determination made by the Centers of Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) regarding coverage for lung cancer screening, this is an opportune time to remind you of the current recommendations and available CDC resources related to lung cancer.

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) recommended lung cancer screening with low dose computed tomography (LDCT) in 2013 (<http://www.uspreventiveservicestaskforce.org/uspstf13/lungcan/lungcanfinalrs.htm>). The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act requires most health insurance plans to cover preventive services at no additional cost to the patient if the Task Force grades the preventive service recommendation as A (strongly recommended) or B (recommended). The Task Force recommendation for lung cancer screening was a Grade B recommendation.

CMS now provides Medicare beneficiaries coverage for lung cancer screening with LDCT if they are considered high risk individuals (<http://www.cms.gov/medicare-coverage-database/details/nca-decision-memo.aspx?NCAId=274>). High risk individuals:

- Are between the ages of 55 and 77, *and*
- Are either current smokers or have quit smoking within the last 15 years; *and*
- Have a tobacco smoking history of at least 30 “pack years” (A *pack year* is smoking an average of one pack of cigarettes per day for one year. For example, a person could have a 30 pack-year history by smoking one pack a day for 30 years or two packs a day for 15 years.); *and*
- Have received a written order from a physician or qualified non-physician practitioner will augment cancer prevention efforts significantly.

To assist you as you acclimate your partners to this new opportunity in lung cancer prevention and early detection, we will continue to maintain and update our resources that include basic information about risks, prevention, symptoms, screening, diagnosis and treatment on [CDC's lung cancer website](#).

Lung cancer screening presents many exciting opportunities for growth and innovations through comprehensive cancer control. We encourage you to consider or continue activities to:

- Develop and deliver appropriate lung cancer prevention messages to increase awareness of appropriate screening protocols and quality care standards.
- Engage new and existing stakeholders to assess capacity, increase access, and ensure quality lung cancer screening for high risk individuals, as well as ensure tobacco cessation support for cigarette smokers undergoing lung cancer screening.
- Practical measures for public health surveillance of lung cancer screening.
- Develop/revise appropriate lung cancer screening objectives for cancer control plans.

Lastly, the vast majority of the population is not considered “high-risk”. Therefore, it is imperative that we continue to emphasize that the most important thing the general public can do to lower risk for lung cancer is to stop smoking or never start. [CDC's smoking cessation website](#) has many resources to help, including free multimedia items to download, fact sheets, and other items.

We look forward to working together as you plan and implement effective lung cancer prevention strategies.



Nikki S. Hayes, MPH

Branch Chief, Comprehensive Cancer Control Branch
Division of Cancer Prevention and Control
National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health
Promotion