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Mission:
To eradicate heart attacks by championing new strategies for prevention while advancing the scientific quest for a cure.

Monday, January 26, 2026

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

CC: Dr. Mehmet Oz, Director, Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

**An Open Letter to Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Regarding the Urgent Need to Modernize the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force**

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

We write as a coalition of physicians, scientists, and public health leaders who have devoted our careers to preventing disease rather than reacting to its late-stage consequences. We share your stated commitment to improving the healthspan and long-term well-being of the American people. In that spirit, we urge you to take decisive action to modernize the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) through the appointment of members with proven records in forward-looking, innovative preventive care.

The USPSTF exerts extraordinary influence over U.S. health policy. Its recommendations determine insurance coverage, shape clinical practice, and define which preventive services Americans can access. Yet despite this authority, the Task Force has too often functioned as a retrospective body, evaluating prevention through outdated evidence frameworks rather than anticipating emerging opportunities. As a result, many USPSTF recommendations lag far behind contemporary science and real-world clinical needs.

This backward-looking approach has had serious consequences. Prevention is frequently endorsed only after decades of outcomes data accumulate, by which time millions of Americans have already suffered avoidable illness, disability, or death. In an era of advanced imaging, precision diagnostics, artificial intelligence, and scalable population-based prevention, this delay is no longer defensible.

Cardiovascular disease is the clearest example. It has been the leading cause of death in the United States for nearly a century, yet the USPSTF offers no recommendation for early detection or treatment of asymptomatic cardiovascular disease. As a result, most Americans with advanced but silent atherosclerosis remain unidentified until they present with a heart attack, stroke, heart failure, or sudden death. Our national policy still waits for catastrophe before acting.

This posture ignores decades of scientific progress showing that cardiovascular disease is detectable long before symptoms arise, that risk is poorly captured by traditional risk factors alone, and that early identification can change outcomes. It also perpetuates

inequity, as those with fewer resources are least able to access preventive care outside of USPSTF-endorsed pathways. The USPSTF must do more than adjudicate the past. It should help set a proactive national prevention agenda. That requires leadership willing to engage emerging evidence, modern diagnostics, and implementation science, rather than deferring action until long after preventable harm has occurred. Other fields, including oncology and infectious disease, have embraced early detection as a national priority. Cardiovascular prevention has not.

As you consider appointments to the USPSTF, we respectfully urge that selection be guided by demonstrated expertise and impact, including:

- A track record in early disease detection and prevention
- Experience translating innovation into population-level practice
- Familiarity with modern diagnostics, imaging, and digital health tools
- Willingness to challenge outdated paradigms when they no longer serve patients

An overhaul of the USPSTF is long overdue. Americans deserve a preventive health strategy that acts before disease steals years of productive life, diminishes quality of life, or drives unsustainable healthcare costs.

We urge you to seize this opportunity for meaningful reform. By modernizing the USPSTF and reorienting it toward proactive, science-driven prevention, you can help place the nation on a path toward fewer preventable deaths, longer healthspan, and better outcomes for all Americans.

Respectfully,

Valentin Fuster, MD, PhD

President, Mount Sinai Fuster Heart Hospital, Physician-in-Chief, Mount Sinai Hospital

Morteza Naghavi, MD

Founder and CEO, Society for Heart Attack Prevention and Eradication (SHAPE)

On behalf of the Signatories (listed in alphabetic order):

1. **George Abela, MD, MSc, FACC**

Professor of Medicine (Cardiology); Director, Interventional Cardiology Research; Michigan State University College of Human Medicine; Internationally recognized investigator in coronary calcification and plaque biology

2. **Arthur Agatston, MD, FACC**

Clinical Professor of Medicine; Florida International University Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine; Founder and Medical Director, South Beach Preventive Cardiology; Developer of the Agatston Coronary Calcium Score

3. **AmirAli Ahmadi, MD, FACC, FSCCT**

Associate Professor of Medicine (Cardiology); Director of Advanced Cardiovascular Imaging; Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; Guideline author and leader in cardiovascular CT and preventive cardiology

4. **Daniel S. Berman, MD, FACC, FAHA**

Professor of Cardiology and Imaging; Cedars-Sinai Medical Center; Past President, American Society of Nuclear Cardiology; Pioneer in cardiac imaging and outcomes research

5. **Michael J. Blaha, MD, MPH, FACC**

Professor of Medicine (Cardiology); Director of Clinical Research, Ciccarone Center for the Prevention of

Cardiovascular Disease; Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine

6. Ron Blankstein, MD, FACC, FSCCT

Professor of Medicine and Radiology; Director of Cardiac CT; Brigham and Women's Hospital; Harvard Medical School

7. Andrea Branch, PhD

Professor of Medicine; Director of Basic and Translational Research in the Institute of Liver Medicine; Associate Professor of Surgery; Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai

8. Eugene Braunwald, MD

Distinguished Hersey Professor of Medicine; Harvard Medical School; Founding Chairman, TIMI (Thrombolysis in Myocardial Infarction) Study Group; Architect of modern cardiovascular clinical trials and evidence-based cardiology; Author of *Braunwald's Heart Disease*, the definitive textbook of cardiovascular medicine

9. Pamela S. Douglas, MD, MACC

Professor of Medicine (Cardiology); Duke University School of Medicine; Past President, American College of Cardiology; Former Chair, ACC Imaging Council

10. Zahi A. Fayad, PhD

Professor of Radiology and Medicine; Director, BioMedical Engineering and Imaging Institute; Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; Global leader in atherosclerosis imaging

11. Jonathan A. Fialkow, M.D., FACC, FAHA

Chief Medical Executive Integrated Services and Precision Care, Baptist Health South Florida. Medical Director, MCVI Lipid and Cardiometabolic Center, Clinical Associate Professor, Florida International University, Herbert Wertheim College of Medicine

12. Ilya Gipp, MD, PhD

Chief Medical Officer for Oncology at GE HealthCare implementing clinical strategy for solutions in cancer care.

13. Philip Greenland, MD

Professor of Preventive Medicine and Medicine (Cardiology); Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine; Former Chair, ACC/AHA Prevention Guidelines; Internationally recognized leader in cardiovascular epidemiology, risk assessment, and primary prevention

14. Martha Gulati, MD, MS, FACC, FAHA, FASPC, FESC

Director, Davis Women Heart Center at Cedars Houston Methodist DeBakey Heart & Vascular Center, Immediate Past President, American Society for Preventive Cardiology

15. Rob Headrick, MD

Thoracic Surgeon; Founder and Chief Executive Officer, BreathEazy™ Mobile Lung Cancer Screening; Leader in mobile CT-based lung cancer screening, early detection, and population health implementation

16. Claudia I. Henschke, MD, PhD

Professor of Radiology; Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; Founder and Principal Investigator,

International Early Lung Cancer Action Program (IELCAP)

17. Sina Kianoush, MD, MPH

Assistant Professor of Medicine (Cardiology) at University of California Irvine; Academic investigator in preventive cardiology and cardiovascular epidemiology

18. Robert A. Kloner, MD, PhD

Chief Science Officer, Director and Chair of Cardiovascular Research Institute, Huntington Medical Research Institutes, Pasadena, CA; Professor of Medicine (Clinical Scholar), Cardiovascular Division, Dept. of Medicine, Keck School of Medicine of University of Southern California; Visiting Associate in Aerospace, Division of Engineering and Applied Science, California Institute of Technology

19. Peter Libby, MD

Mallinckrodt Professor of Medicine; Harvard Medical School; Cardiologist, Mass General Brigham; Co-Director Mass General Brigham Center for Inflammation Imaging. President, Residual Risk Reduction Initiative (R3i Foundation), Immediate Past President, International Atherosclerosis Society, Executive Editor, European Heart Journal. Medical Director Center of Excellence in Vascular Biology

20. Donald M. Lloyd-Jones, MD, ScM, FAHA

Director, Framingham Center for Population and Prevention Science; PI, Framingham Heart Study; Section Chief, Preventive Medicine and Epidemiology, Boston University School of Medicine; Past President, American Heart Association.

21. David J. Maron, MD, FACC, FAHA, FASPC

C.F. Rehnborg Professor of Medicine; Chief, Stanford Prevention Research Center; Stanford University School of Medicine; President-Elect, American Society for Preventive Cardiology

22. Michael V. McConnell, MD, MSEE, FACC

Clinical Professor of Cardiovascular Medicine, Stanford University School of Medicine; International leader in cardiovascular imaging, AI, and prevention; Author of *Fight Heart Disease Like Cancer*

23. Oren Mechanic, MD, MPH

Senior Clinical Consultant at the Agatston Center for Preventive Medicine and AI-CVD Co-investigator

24. Jeffrey I. Mechanick, MD, PhD(hc), FACP, MACE, FACN, FASPEN

Professor of Medicine; Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; Past President, American Association of Clinical Endocrinology, American College of Endocrinology, and American Board of Physician Nutrition Specialists

25. Roxana Mehran, MD, FACC

Professor of Medicine (Cardiology); Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; Vice President, American College of Cardiology; Incoming President, American College of Cardiology; International leader in interventional cardiology, clinical trials, and cardiovascular outcomes research

26. Sabee Molloi, PhD

Professor and Vice Chairman of Research Department of Radiological Sciences; University of California, Irvine;

Director, Imaging Physics Laboratory; Innovator in quantitative coronary imaging

27. James Mulshine, MD

Professor of Internal Medicine; Center for Healthy Aging Rush University; Vice Chair and Scientific Director, Prevent Cancer Foundation, International leader in lung cancer screening and prevention research

28. Jagat Narula, MD, PhD, FACC

K. Lance Gould Distinguished University Chair of Coronary Pathophysiology, UT Health McGovern Medical College. Executive Director, Cardiovascular Institute, UT Health and Memorial Hermann Health Hospital

29. Khurram Nasir, MD MPH MSc

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Professor of Medicine, Weill Cornell Medical College

30. Koen Nieman, MD, PhD

Professor of Medicine (Cardiology) and Radiology; Stanford University School of Medicine; Associate Editor, Journal of the American College of Cardiology (JACC); International authority in coronary CT angiography and cardiovascular imaging

31. Bruce Pyenson, FSA, MAAA

Principal and Consulting Actuary; Health policy expert in Medicare data analysis for preventive services and healthcare economics

32. Paolo Raggi, MD, FACC

Professor of Medicine (Cardiology); University of Alberta; Adjunct Professor of Epidemiology, Emory University; Co-Editor, Atherosclerosis. Expert in coronary artery calcium and cardiovascular prevention

33. Jamal S. Rana MD, PhD, FACC

Chair, Medical Specialties & Interventional Services, Kaiser Permanente Oakland. Professor, Department of Clinical Science, Kaiser Permanente Bernard J. Tyson School of Medicine

34. Anthony P. Reeves, PhD

Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering; Cornell University; Director, Center for Biomedical Imaging and Diagnostics; Expert in machine learning CT-based lung cancer screening

35. Paul M. Ridker, MD, MPH

Eugene Braunwald Professor of Medicine; Harvard Medical School; Director, Center for Cardiovascular Disease Prevention; Brigham and Women's Hospital; World authority in inflammation and atherosclerosis

36. Neil M. Rofsky, MD, MHA, FACR, FISM RM, FSABI

Professor and Chair of Radiology; Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; Radiologist-in-Chief, Mount Sinai Health System; Former Chair of Radiology, UT Southwestern Medical Center; National leader in advanced medical imaging, MRI innovation, and academic radiology leadership

37. Alexander T. Sandhu, MD, MS, FACC, FAHA

Associate Professor of Medicine (Cardiology); David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA; Health services and

outcomes researcher with expertise in cardiovascular imaging, comparative effectiveness research, and population-level cardiovascular disease outcomes

38. Prediman K. Shah, MD

Shapell and Webb Chair in Clinical Cardiology, Director, Oppenheimer Atherosclerosis Research Center and Atherosclerosis Prevention and Treatment Center, Cedars-Sinai Smidt Heart Institute, Distinguished Professor of Medicine at UCLA

39. Leslee J. Shaw, PhD

Professor of Medicine; Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; Director of Outcomes Research; Past President, Society of Cardiovascular Computed Tomography (SCCT); Internationally recognized leader in cardiovascular imaging outcomes research and population-based risk assessment

40. Gregg W. Stone, MD, FACC, MSCI

Professor of Medicine (Cardiology); Professor of Population Health Sciences and Policy; Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; Principal Investigator and Study Chair for multiple landmark international cardiovascular clinical trials

41. Renu Virmani, MD

Founder and President, CVPath Institute; Clinical Professor of Pathology; Georgetown University School of Medicine; World-renowned authority on atherosclerotic plaque pathology, vulnerable plaque mechanisms, and the histopathologic foundations of coronary artery disease

42. Kim Allan Williams Sr., MD, MACC, FAHA, MASNC, FESC

Legacy Foundation of Kentuckiana Endowed Chair in Health Equity, Professor and Chair, Department of Internal Medicine, Editor-in-Chief, International Journal of Disease Reversal and Prevention

43. Nathan D. Wong, PhD, MPH, FACC, FAHA, FNLA, MASPC,

Professor of Medicine; Director, Heart Disease Prevention Program; Co-Director, Center for Global Cardiometabolic Health and Nutrition, University of California, Irvine; Past President, American Society for Preventive Cardiology; Internationally recognized expert in cardiovascular epidemiology, preventive cardiology and coronary artery calcium-based risk assessment

44. David F. Yankelevitz, MD

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45. JoAnne Zawitoski, JD

Attorney and Chairwoman, Society for Heart Attack Prevention and Eradication (SHAPE); National advocate for preventive cardiovascular care, early detection policy, and patient-centered health reform

46. Javier Zulueta, MD, PhD

Adjunct Professor of Pulmonology at Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai; Chief Medical Officer Qure.ai, World authority in emphysema and CT-based lung nodule incidental screening initiatives