

Protecting Preventive Care Following ACA Court Decision

On March 30, a federal judge in Texas issued a ruling to strike down the Affordable Care Act requirement that health insurers cover, without patient co-pays or deductibles, preventive care services recommended by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.

As primary care physicians, family physicians are dedicated to preventing disease and illness before it occurs by screening for cancer, administering vaccines, and providing many other preventive healthcare services across the lifespan. Thus, Michigan Academy of Family Physicians applauds Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's actions to protect preventive services for the state's citizens.

Gov. Whitmer called on the Michigan Legislature and Congress to "take swift action to pass laws to help ensure Michiganders can continue to have access to these critical services without having to worry about whether they can afford it," and she issued a [letter](#) directing the Michigan Department of Insurance and Financial Services to:

- Promptly issue guidance to help inform Michiganders of which preventive care services are affected by the court's decision
- Immediately begin working with Michigan's health insurers to determine what steps can be taken to ensure Michigan families continue to have affordable coverage for these lifesaving healthcare services
- Develop recommendations as to other ways the State of Michigan can take action to ensure every Michigander continues to receive preventive healthcare now and in the future

The Governor also secured commitments from [insurers](#) representing 100% of the fully insured health insurance market in Michigan that, while the decision is being appealed, they will maintain no-cost preventive healthcare services. This protects the current preventive healthcare coverage of 2.1 million Michiganders.

At the national level, American Academy of Family Physicians joined the American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American College of Physicians, American Osteopathic Association, and American Psychiatric Association in issuing a [statement](#) on behalf the combined 600,000 physicians and medical students they represent.

“Our physicians are on the frontlines of care, and we fear this decision will strip millions of patients of their access to important screenings for cancer, heart disease, counseling services, and preventive medications, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) medications for the prevention of HIV. Invalidating these coverage requirements will make access to evidence-based preventive care financially unattainable for many patients.”

This week a federal appeals court placed a stay on part of the initial ruling, leaving other parts in place that will reverse recent FDA actions that expanded access to medication abortion pills. The Department of Justice stated it will now bring this issue before the U.S. Supreme Court.