

## Improvements and Upgrades to the Electronic Preventive Services Selector

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<b>Principal Investigator:</b>	McCormack, Lauren
<b>Organization:</b>	Research Triangle Institute (RTI)
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**Summary:** In October 2006, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ) introduced the Electronic Preventive Services Selector (ePSS), an interactive tool that provides real-time decision support for clinicians as they select preventive services for their patients. The software cross-references patient characteristics, including age, sex, and selected behavioral risk factors, against 110 U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommendations covering 59 preventive services topics. The search results rendered at the point-of-care provide a summary of individual patient-specific recommendations, including screening tests, counseling topics, and information on preventive medications. The ePSS was launched initially for use as a Web-based resource available for download to mobile devices using the Palm and Windows Mobile computing platforms. In response to the prevalence of handheld devices in clinical care, subsequent updates to the tool made ePSS available for BlackBerry devices, iPads, and iPhones.

This project is refining and expanding the content and functionalities of the ePSS tool. It provides an opportunity to improve the critical content of the system, particularly in helping providers better engage their patients in discussions of preference-sensitive recommendations and in developing tools and resources requested by health care providers.

A range of formative research methodologies have been used. These include interviews with clinicians, ethnographic observation of clinicians using the tool with patients, and a user survey on facilitators and barriers to ePSS tool use in clinical settings, as well as users' enhancement preferences. Content will be assessed by the following criteria: 1) ability to enhance clinicians' communication with patients about USPSTF recommendations; and 2) ability to increase clinicians' awareness, understanding, and consideration of USPSTF recommendations. The project team is also developing a strategy for seamlessly integrating updated content into the ePSS to ensure a functional product.

### Project Objectives:

- Identify and engage a technical expert panel to provide feedback in the research design, findings from the analysis, and final recommendations. **(Ongoing)**
- Conduct formative research with tool users to understand barrier and facilitators to use as well as preferences for enhancements. **(Achieved)**
- Identify, develop, and prioritize a subset of recommendations for new ePSS content. **(Achieved)**
- Develop and test new content and functionality that improves the utility of ePSS with clinicians. **(Ongoing)**

**2011 Activities:** At the beginning of 2011, RTI, following a plan approved by AHRQ, completed its formative research with clinicians to understand both current use of the ePSS and potential areas and preference for improvements. Research activities included reviewing Web logs of aggregate usage data for the ePSS,

interviewing current and new ePSS users (n=9), observing clinicians using the ePSS with patients (n=9), and reviewing responses to custom questions incorporated into a standard AHRQ Web-based customer satisfaction survey deployed on the ePSS site. Based on the findings of the formative research, RTI proposed several key areas for improving ePSS.

- Develop prototype patient handouts that are accessible through the ePSS to support patient decisionmaking on USPSTF recommendations.
- Develop a training module within the ePSS to improve clinicians' skills in communicating about USPTF recommendations, particularly those that are preference-sensitive.
- Provide guidance for integration of the new content into the ePSS and for functionality improvements, particularly in regard to the organization and display of tools and resources provided through the ePSS.

In support of the development of the new content, the project team has engaged in an iterative process involving AHRQ to review draft materials and conduct testing with appropriate audiences.

**Impact and Findings:** This project has no findings to date.

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**Target Population:** General

**Strategic Goal:** Develop and disseminate health IT evidence and evidence-based tools to improve health care decisionmaking through the use of integrated data and knowledge management.

**Business Goal:** Knowledge Creation

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