

SECTION BY SECTION

Standardizing Cancer Recommendations for Earlier Evaluation and Navigation of Screenings (SCREENS) Act

Overview

Cancer is the [second leading cause of death](#) in the United States. We know that [screening](#) increases the chance for earlier treatment and reduces mortality. With [increased rates of cancer in young people](#), we need screening tools and information that are more accessible and easy to use. [Patients feel empowered](#) to make decisions about their health when they have access to a patient-facing tool for cancer screenings. The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force ([USPSTF](#)) produces recommended guidelines on when to get screened, but routine changes in screening recommendations and treatment details can make it [difficult for providers to be aware](#) of the latest screening recommendations for an individual patient.

While cancer screening guidelines exist, it is not always easy to navigate them in a patient-friendly manner. Screening guidelines can be complex, fragmented, and difficult to interpret.

There is a clear opportunity for improvement. The federal government can play a critical role in making cancer screening guidelines more accessible, transparent, and user-friendly. By supporting innovation and enabling better integration of health data, technology, and cancer screening guidelines, policymakers can help ensure that accurate screening information reaches patients earlier and more efficiently.

Leading examples from the [Cancer Screen Iowa](#) tool and the University of Utah Health's [Decision Precision+](#) show that when guidelines, technology, and data are integrated, patients and their health care providers can make proactive and informed decisions about when to get screened without waiting for signs of cancer.

Bill Summary

The SCREENS Act seeks to improve patient and provider access to cancer screening guidelines by making them more accessible, transparent, and user-friendly. The legislation would direct the Department of Health and Human Services, through the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC), to ensure that cancer screening recommendations are available in a data-friendly format for apps, tools, and interoperable technology development. This will allow patients and providers to easily access cancer screening recommendations.

Section by Section

National Computable-Guideline Framework for Cancer Screening Recommendations.

The legislation directs the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC), to develop a national computable-guideline framework for cancer screening recommendations.

The national computable-guideline framework would ensure that cancer screening recommendations are publicly published in machine-readable screening logic, so that they could be easily incorporated into provider and patient-centered tools. The framework would be based on patient data and certain statistics from the Minimal Common Oncology Data Elements (mCODE) dataset or the United States Core Data for Interoperability (USCDI) dataset.

The legislation would also require certified health information technology to include the ability for these computable guidelines to determine a patient's status and their recommended cancer screenings. Certified electronic health record systems would be required to be capable of identifying whether an individual is overdue for recommended cancer screenings based on current guideline logic from mCODE and USCDI.

The legislation would maintain the privacy of patient data and would not permit the unauthorized use, disclosure, or re-identification of patient health information, as required by the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 (HIPAA) and its implementing regulations.

The sponsors of the legislation seek stakeholder feedback on the following:

1. Ways to further require certified health information technology to support standardized interoperability with federally recognized clinical trial registries and trial-matching services;
2. Strategies to enable providers to identify and, where appropriate, notify patients of potentially relevant clinical trials based on structured clinical data.

Guidance Relating to Integration of Computable-Guideline Cancer Screening Recommendations into Health Plans.

This provision would require the Secretary of HHS to issue guidance to Medicare Advantage plans, Medicaid managed care organizations, and qualified health plans under the Federal marketplace to integrate electronic cancer screening tool technology into health plan tools and allow patients to opt into certified health information technology that enables patients to use the cancer screening recommendations.

Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) Research, Pilot Projects, Implementation Activities, and Dissemination Efforts.

To accelerate the development and implementation of patient-centered cancer screening tools, the legislation would authorize the Secretary of HHS to collaborate with PCORI on activities that advance the development, testing, implementation, dissemination, and evaluation of computable cancer screening guidelines and interoperable decision-support technologies. The HHS Secretary may receive technical assistance, research support, funding support, or other assistance made available by PCORI.