

OFFICE OF LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH  
PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY



PA 14-157—sHB 5443  
*Human Services Committee*

**AN ACT CONCERNING COVERAGE UNDER STATE MEDICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS FOR CERTAIN OVER-THE-COUNTER DRUGS**

**SUMMARY:** This act expands the types of over-the-counter drugs the Department of Social Services (DSS) may pay for through its medical assistance programs to include those that must be covered as essential health benefits under the federal Affordable Care Act (ACA), including drugs rated “A” or “B” in the current U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) recommendations for people with specific diagnoses (see BACKGROUND). USPSTF’s recommendations currently include (1) aspirin for men age 45 to 79 and women age 55 to 79 to prevent cardiovascular disease and (2) folic acid for women who are pregnant or capable of pregnancy. The law generally bans DSS from paying for over-the-counter drugs, with the following exceptions:

1. over-the-counter drug coverage through the Connecticut AIDS Drug Assistance Program (CADAP),
2. insulin or insulin syringes,
3. nutritional supplements for people who must be tube fed or who cannot safely get nutrition in any other form, and
4. smoking cessation drugs.

EFFECTIVE DATE: Upon passage

**BACKGROUND**

*USPSTF*

The USPSTF is an independent panel of primary care providers who are experts in prevention and evidence-based medicine. They develop recommendations for primary clinicians and health systems based on scientific evidence reviews of clinical preventive health care services. The task force assigns preventive services it recommends a grade of “A” or “B.” Grade A means there is a high certainty that the net benefit is substantial. Grade B means there is a high certainty that the net benefit is moderate or a moderate certainty that the net benefit is moderate to substantial.

Since September 23, 2010, the ACA has required new individual and group health insurance plans to provide full coverage for preventive care and screenings that the USPSTF recommends, including vaccinations and cancer screenings (42 USC § 300gg-13(a)).

*Related Act*

OLR PUBLIC ACT SUMMARY

PA 14-217, § 74, is identical to this act.

OLR Tracking: KMD:TA:JKL:am