FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 10, 2015

PRESS CONTACT
Rachel Ryan
rryan@powelltate.com
202.585.2055

Nation’s Urologists Rally Behind Blackburn-Rush USPSTF Reform Bill

Washington, D.C. – Today, the American Association of Clinical Urologists (AACU), the American Urological Association (AUA), and LUGPA – the three largest urology associations in the United States – voiced unified support for the USPSTF Transparency and Accountability Act of 2015, introduced by Representatives Marsha Blackburn (R-TN-7) and Bobby Rush (D-IL-1). The legislation aims to reform the process by which the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) reviews and develops recommendations for clinical preventive services; a process that is currently exempt from transparency provisions such as the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) and the Administrative Procedures Act (APA).

The bill includes a critically important mandate to ensure that a “balanced representation of primary and specialty care providers” and other key stakeholders in the health care community are involved in development and review of USPSTF recommendations. Other changes include publishing a draft research plan to guide the systematic evidence review process; considering findings and research by federal agencies and departments; and making the evidence review available for public comment.

“We are united in applauding Reps. Blackburn and Rush for their commitment to reforming the USPSTF review process so that the expert opinion of medical specialists is considered,” said Dr. Gary Kirsh, president of LUGPA. “It is imperative that these formal recommendations, affecting access to potentially lifesaving diagnostic services, be rigorously reviewed by those on the frontlines of health care delivery.”

The failure of the current system is underscored by recent data demonstrating the deleterious impact of the USPSTF recommendation against prostate-specific antigen (PSA)-based screening for prostate cancer. Researchers found that between 2011 and 2013, in the immediate wake of the USPSTF prostate cancer screening recommendation, there was a significant increase in the diagnosis of higher-risk prostate cancer and concluded that this would potentially increase prostate cancer-related deaths. These findings confirmed urologist’s earlier warnings about the potential public health catastrophe that could result from implementation of the USPSTF recommendation.

“This dramatic shift in prostate cancer diagnoses is unfortunate, but not surprising when you consider that the USPSTF made its recommendations without considering the expert opinion of the urologic community or other cancer care experts,” said William W. Bohnert, president of the AUA. “The effort by Reps. Blackburn and Rush to increase USPSTF transparency will benefit the welfare of all Americans.”
“Our organizations represent an overwhelming consensus of urologists who support this bi-partisan effort led by Reps. Blackburn and Bush, which has the potential to reverse the destructive effects of the USPSTF recommendation against prostate cancer screening,” said Mark D. Stovisky, MD, MBA, FACS, president of AACU. “Passage of this bill will ensure that patients are empowered to make well informed health care decisions.”

###

**About the American Association of Clinical Urologists:** The American Association of Clinical Urologists (AACU) is the only national organization to serve urology with the sole purpose of promoting and preserving the professional autonomy and financial viability of each of its members. AACU’s resources are dedicated to inform members of the issues affecting their practice and profession, and then to work directly to influence the resolutions of these issues.

**About the American Urological Association:** Founded in 1902 and headquartered near Baltimore, Maryland, the American Urological Association is a leading advocate for the specialty of urology, and has more than 18,000 members throughout the world. The AUA is a premier urologic association, providing invaluable support to the urologic community as it pursues its mission of fostering the highest standards of urologic care through education, research and the formulation of health policy.

**About LUGPA:** LUGPA represents urology group practices in the United States, with approximately 2,000 physicians who make up more than 20 percent of the nation’s practicing urologists. LUGPA and its member practices are committed to best practices, research, data collection and benchmarking to promote quality clinical outcomes. For more information, visit [lugpa.org](http://lugpa.org).