

Panel backs lung cancer screening for some smokers

July 29 2013, by Marilyn Marchione

Government advisers have endorsed lung cancer screening for the first time. They say certain current and former heavy smokers should get annual CT scans, a type of X-ray, to cut their chances of dying of the disease.

Monday's advice by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force is a draft recommendation. If it becomes final as expected, it would clear the way for insurers to cover the scans. The panel recommends them for people ages 55 through 79 who smoked a pack of cigarettes a day for 30 years or the equivalent, such as two packs a day for 15 years.

Whether screening would help younger or lighter smokers is not known, so scans aren't advised for them. Scans also aren't advised for people who quit at least 15 years ago.

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