



2020 Rhode Island Legislative Priorities

Victory in the fight against cancer requires bold new public policies that promote cancer prevention, early detection of cancer, and expand access to quality, affordable health care. Lawmakers make many decisions that impact the lives of Rhode Islanders touched by cancer and their leadership is vital to defeating this disease. In 2020, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) will work with the Rhode Island General Assembly in support of the following priorities:

Reducing the Toll of Tobacco

- **Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Funding:** ACS CAN will work to fund and sustain evidence-based, statewide tobacco use prevention and cessation programs at \$3.2 million, with future regular increases until we reach the CDC recommended level of \$12.8 million for evidence-based tobacco prevention, and cessation programs that help people who smoke quit and prevent children from ever starting.
- **Tax Parity:** ACS CAN will work to establish tax parity among all tobacco products in Rhode Island. This will ensure that all tobacco products are taxed at a rate equivalent to our state cigarette tax to encourage tobacco users to quit using tobacco instead of switching from cigarettes to a non-cigarette product, which may be cheaper if it is taxed at a lower rate.
- **Tobacco 21:** ACS CAN will support measures to increase the state age of sale to 21 for all tobacco products and implement measures that enable active enforcement such as retailer licensing and penalties, including license suspension and revocation, without creating new categories of products which exempt certain products from tobacco control laws, without penalizing youth and without preempting local jurisdictions from passing stronger tobacco control laws.

Cancer Prevention and Early Detection

- **Colorectal Cancer:** ACS CAN will work to increase funding for colorectal cancer screening, treatment, and patient navigation programs. Additionally, ACS CAN will work to ensure health plans cover colorectal cancer screening beginning at age 45 in accordance with updated American Cancer Society guidelines.
- **Breast and Cervical Cancer:** ACS CAN will advocate to maintain funding of \$69,459 for the Women's Cancer Screening program, our state's breast and cervical cancer screening and treatment program for low-income uninsured and underinsured women administered by the Rhode Island Department of Health.

Quality of Life

- **Palliative Care:** ACS CAN helped lead the establishment of the Palliative Care/Quality of Life Advisory Council through legislation in the statehouse in 2013. ACS CAN will continue to advocate for public policies that emphasize the importance of providing palliative care to help improve the quality of life for cancer patients and their families.
- **Protecting Access to Pain Medication for Cancer Patients:** ACS CAN will monitor legislative proposals regarding the prescribing of opioid pain medications and advocate for a balanced approach that promotes safe prescribing and dispensing of pain management medication that does not interfere with access to these medicines for the cancer patients and survivors who need them.

Healthy Eating and Active Living Environments (HEALE)

ACS CAN will work with policymakers to plan, implement, and evaluate HEALE priority issues:

- Evaluate and support sugar-sweetened beverage taxes that meet ACS CAN's policy criteria.
- Support legislation for infrastructure and programs aimed at increasing physical activity in transportation and recreation.
- Establish nutrition guidelines for foods and beverages provided or sold in government buildings.

Ensuring Access to Quality Care

- **Medication Access:** ACS CAN will advocate for legislation that ensures prior authorization and step therapy requirements for prescription drugs are clear, efficient and patient-friendly while also allowing for exceptions when appropriate. We will also support legislation to prohibit mid-year changes to prescription drug coverage or out-of-pocket costs during the plan year.

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ACS CAN is making cancer a top priority for public officials and candidates at the federal, state, and local levels. ACS CAN empowers advocates across the country to make their voices heard and influence evidence-based public policy change as well as legislative and regulatory solutions that will reduce the cancer burden. As the American Cancer Society's nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate, ACS CAN is critical to the fight for a world without cancer. For more information please visit www.fightcancer.org.

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