**EMBARGOED UNTIL:** **August 9, 2018**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

Stephanie Winn

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

916 802-4033

Steph.Winn@cancer.org

 **Nevada Falling Short on Cancer-Fighting Public Policies**

***New Opioid Legislation Passed Last Session are Keeping Cancer Patients/Survivors in Chronic Pain; State Lawmakers Need to Address Urgent Issues During Upcoming 2019 Legislative Session***

Reno, Nevada – August 9, 2018 – Nevada is falling short when it comes to implementing policies and passing legislation to prevent and reduce suffering and death from cancer. According to the latest edition of How Do You Measure Up?: A Progress Report on State Legislative Activity to Reduce Cancer Incidence and Mortality, Nevada measured up to policy recommendations in just four of the nine issue areas. The report was released today by the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN).

“This 16th edition of the report shows that we must do more to reduce suffering and death from cancer. But we have the power to make a difference for Nevadans immediately by implementing proven cancer fighting policies,” said ACS CAN Nevada Government Relations Director Tom McCoy. “We owe it to cancer patients, survivors and everyone at risk of developing the disease, to do what we can to prevent, treat and help them cope with this devastating disease.”

Despite medical breakthroughs, one in three Nevadans will get cancer sometime in their lifetime. The How Do You Measure Up? report rates states in nine specific areas of public policy that can help fight cancer, including increased access to care through Medicaid, funding for cancer screening programs, smoke-free laws, cigarette tax levels, funding for tobacco prevention and cessation programs, cessation coverage under Medicaid and restricting indoor tanning devices for minors. The report also looks at whether a state provides a balanced approach to pain medication and if it has passed policies proven to increase patient quality of life.

This year’s report also highlights a significant trend. In 2018, there have been more than 470 state legislative proposals introduced across the country proposals introduced related to pain management and opioid issues nationwide. In contrast, in 2015 there were fewer than 80 state legislative proposals introduced regarding these same issues.

The How Do You Measure Up? report includes a special section on the impact of pain policy and evaluates whether Nevada is implementing balanced pain policies. Specifically, the report takes a deep dive into how states can reduce opioid abuse while ensuring patients who legitimately need these drugs maintain access to them. Many cancer patients and survivors need pain medication to live and complete even the most basic day-to-day tasks—but across the country, the wave of state legislation meant to address opioid abuse has had unintended consequences, making it harder for people with cancer or chronic diseases to access legitimate pain care.

In Nevada, cancer patients and survivors have faced significant barriers when attempting to access their prescribed pain treatments because of recent policies enacted that are aimed at combatting the opioid epidemic.

“While opioid abuse is a critical public health crisis that must be addressed, Nevada lawmakers should fine tune regulations passed during the last legislative session that are keeping people with serious and chronic conditions from accessing the legitimate pain care that they need,” said McCoy.

A color-coded system classifies how well a state is doing in each issue. Green shows that a state has adopted evidence-based policies and best practices; yellow indicates moderate movement toward the benchmark and red shows where states are falling short.

**How Nevada Measures Up:**

Increased Access to Medicaid GREEN

Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program Funding RED

Access to Palliative Care GREEN

Pain Policy YELLOW

Cigarette Tax Rates GREEN

Smoke-free Laws YELLOW

Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Program Funding RED

Medicaid Coverage of Tobacco Cessation Services RED

Indoor Tanning GREEN

To view the complete report and details on Nevada grades, visit www.acscan.org.

ACS CAN, the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. ACS CAN works to encourage elected officials and candidates to make cancer a top national priority. ACS CAN gives ordinary people extraordinary power to fight cancer with the training and tools they need to make their voices heard. For more information, visit www.acscan.org.

# # #