



American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

2019-2020 Legislative Agenda

An Act empowering health care consumers

SB 561 - Sen. Brendan Crighton & HB 969 – Rep. Jen Benson

As consumers are asked to be more savvy health care shoppers, they can only do so with accurate information. While the cost of a drug varies significantly depending on the source, consumers who are increasingly facing co-insurance (rather than a fixed co-pay) must know the cost of a drug before they can choose the plan that best meets their needs. Without this information, consumers may pick the wrong plan, unnecessarily increasing their cost and likelihood that they forgo needed medications. This bill would ensure that all the necessary cost and utilization management information is available to consumers when they choose their health plans.

An Act regulating flavored tobacco products

SB 1279 – Sen. John Keenan & HB 1902 – Rep. Danielle Gregoire

As Big Tobacco continues to target kids with their sweet, candy flavored, yet still addictive and harmful products, a priority bill would ban the sale of flavored tobacco products, including e-cigarettes in the Commonwealth. Flavored products are clearly designed to hook a new generation of kids on Big Tobacco's deadly products.

An Act relative to tobacco premium ratings

HB 964 – Rep. Lori Ehrlich

Would prohibit insurers from charging higher premiums for tobacco users. Current law provides for the Commissioner of the Division of Insurance to decide each year whether to allow tobacco as a rating factor. Tobacco users should not be punished for an addiction made worse by the tactics of Big Tobacco! Instead, we should ensure they have access to the evidence-based tools needed to help them quit.

An Act protecting youth from nicotine addiction

SB 1606 – Sen. Harriette Chandler & HB 2436 – Rep. Marjorie Decker

The rapid rise in the number of youth who use tobacco products is a public health crisis that threatens to erode decades of progress made in reducing tobacco use and nicotine addiction. Massachusetts currently collects sales tax on e-cigarette/vape products, but not excise taxes. This bill would add an excise tax of 75% of wholesale to these products, increasing their prices and making them harder for young people to afford. Additionally, regularly increasing the price of cigars and cigarettes is one of the most effective ways to help smokers quit and prevent kids from starting. This bill would also increase the tax on cigarettes by \$1, bringing it up to \$4.51, and increase the tax on cigars from 40% of wholesale to 80%. History and evidence shows that this will reduce the smoking rate, saving some of the more than \$4 billion in health care costs annually attributed to tobacco use in Massachusetts, and save lives.

An Act to provide Medicaid coverage for tobacco cessation

SB 704 – Sen. Jason Lewis & HB 1129 - Rep. Christine Barber

MassHealth enrollees are more likely to need cessation support, given their economic status and higher likelihood of tobacco use. After Massachusetts led the nation in 2006 by including a comprehensive tobacco cessation benefit within all MassHealth plans, there was a significant uptake of individuals using the evidence-based cessation treatments. This led to reduced smoking rates, improved health

outcomes, and decreased medical costs in the first two years. This bill seeks to expand access to the program by allowing trained and approved dentists and behavioral health practitioners to provide cessation counseling as recommended by the CDC.

An Act reducing tobacco sales to minors

SB 976 – Sen. Jason Lewis & HB 1951 – Rep. John Lawn

By raising the age of sale for tobacco products from 18 to 21 last session, we made significant progress in our work to prevent youth from becoming addicted to nicotine. But we can't stop there. This bill would require retailers to check for identification for anyone purchasing tobacco products, including e-cigarettes. The bill also increases penalties on retailers for selling these products to minors.

An Act relative to expanding access to healthy food choices in vending machines on state property

SB 1290 – Sen. Jason Lewis

Traditional vending machines sell snacks and beverages high in sugar, trans fat, saturated fat, and salt, with little nutritional value. This bill would improve access to healthy foods and beverages by requiring vending machines on public property (like in public buildings, parks, and recreation centers) to include healthy options.

An Act to promote healthy alternatives to sugary drinks

SB 1291 - Sen. Jason Lewis & HB 2529 - Rep. Kay Kahn

Sugary drinks contribute to obesity, which has been associated with an increased risk of cancer development and recurrence, as well as decreased risk of survival, for many cancers. Sugary drinks are the leading source of added sugar and one of the leading sources of calories in American diets. About 50 percent of the population consumes at least one sugary drink each day, with about 10 percent of youth consuming three or more. Nearly 40 percent of all added sugars come from sugary beverages. This bill would place an excise tax on sugary drinks that contain added sugar to reduce consumption.

An Act relative to fail first and patient safety

SB 1235 - Sen. Julian Cyr & HB 1853 - Rep. Jen Benson

Fail First prevents patients from accessing the treatment prescribed by their health care provider by making them first try and fail on one or more alternative drugs. Fail First can make patients sicker by delaying access to the most effective treatment. The time spent on trying and failing one or more medications can lead to disease progression and increase health care costs. This bill would ensure Fail First protocols are based on clinical guidelines and provide for a transparent exceptions and appeals process for health care patients and providers.

For more information, contact:

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The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (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, visit www.fightcancer.org