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 Arkansas residents touched by cancer and their leadership is vital to defeating this disease. In 2022 the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) will work with the Arkansas Legislature on efforts that address disruption in cancer care and screenings; provide affordable, adequate access to healthcare insurance including Medicaid; as well appropriations funding for lifesaving cancer screening and prevention policies that help people that use tobacco products quit and deter kids from ever using tobacco products. The Arkansas Legislature will convene for a fiscal session in 2022, and will not file or consider legislative proposals outside the scope of the state’s budget. We will be making the following evidence-based policies a priority and ask for your support:

Ensuring Access to Quality Care

* **Medicaid Expansion**: The Arkansas Legislature approved Medicaid expansion in 2021, and then appropriated funding in support of expansion. In early 2022, CMS ordered the state to eliminate its premium structure. ACS CAN will monitor the progress of both expansion and the elimination of premiums to ensure program integrity, advocating and communicating with the Arkansas Legislature and the Department of Human Services when needed.

Cancer Prevention and Early Detection

* **Breast and Cervical Cancer:** ACS CAN will advocate to maintain funding of $9.5 million for BreastCare, the Arkansas breast and cervical cancer screening and treatment program for low-income uninsured and underinsured women administered by the Arkansas Department of Health.

Reducing the Toll of Tobacco

* **Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Funding:** ACS CAN will work to increase funding for evidence-based, statewide tobacco prevention and cessation programs. The state currently dedicates $12 million to tobacco prevention and cessation. Increasing funding to $16 million will allow the program to make progress in reducing smoking prevalence in the state.
* **Access to Tobacco Cessation:** ACS CAN will advocate for the state Medicaid program to provide a comprehensive tobacco cessation benefit to all enrollees without cost-sharing or other barriers to accessing care. Currently the Medicaid program covers all 7 FDA-approved cessation medications and individual counseling for all enrollees but does not provide coverage for group or telephone cessation counseling.
* **Smoke-free Air:** ACS CAN will work to build momentum and educate lawmakers regarding the importance of a statewide comprehensive smoke-free law that covers all workplaces including restaurants, bars, and gaming facilities.

Cancer Research Funding

* **Research Appropriations**: ACS CAN will work to increase appropriations to support scientific research on cutting-edge treatments.

Local Control

Local governments are uniquely positioned to meet the needs of the people in their communities. ACS CAN supports their ability to pass laws that are proven to promote good health, well-being, and equity. However, preemption—when a higher level of government revokes local authority-can restrict local lawmakers’ ability to pass innovative and proactive public health policies. ACS CAN works at the local, state, and federal levels; thus, it supports each level of government’s ability to implement policies to protect the public’s health. The right of local governments to pass public health policies must be preserved to continue future advocacy efforts to reduce suffering and death from cancer. ACS CAN will work with a statewide tobacco preemption repeal coalition to further efforts to repeal the law and raise the profile of the issue in the public health space.

For more information, contact: Matt Glanville, Oklahoma and Arkansas Government Relations Director ACS CAN

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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](http://www.fightcancer.org).