

2026 New York State 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 New York State residents impacted by cancer and their leadership is vital to defeating this disease. In 2026 the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) will work with the New York State Legislature on legislative and regulatory efforts that provide affordable, adequate access to health insurance including Medicaid, ensure adequate funding for lifesaving cancer screening and prevention programs, and enact prevention policies to protect kids from tobacco products and help support those who are trying to quit. We will be making the following fact-based policies a priority and ask for your support:

Ensuring Access to Quality Care

- **Medicaid Defense:** The preservation of eligibility, coverage, and access to Medicaid remains critically important for many low-income state residents who depend on the program for cancer and chronic disease prevention, as well as early detection, diagnostic, and treatment services. ACS CAN will work to ensure Medicaid enrollees have adequate access and coverage and will oppose proposals that create barriers or reduce access to care for cancer patients, survivors, and those who could be diagnosed with cancer.
- **Patient Navigation:** ACS CAN will advocate for legislation that will require all state regulated health plans in New York State, including Medicaid, to reimburse for patient navigation services. Patient navigation is the individualized assistance offered to patients, families, and caregivers to help overcome health care system barriers and facilitate timely access to quality health and psychosocial care. Yet to date, patient navigation services are still absent or limited in many cancer programs and hospital settings due to cost concerns and lack of clinical reimbursement.
- **Paid Family and Medical Leave:** ACS CAN will advocate for legislation that ensures all working cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers have access to paid family and medical leave that allows them to take time off work to attend to their own or a loved one's care without losing their job or income.
- **Genetic Testing Discrimination:** ACS CAN will advocate for protecting New Yorkers from genetic testing discrimination. The fear of genetic discrimination is leading some individuals to forgo needed cancer screenings or decline participation in clinical trials involving genetic sequencing.

Cancer Research Funding

- **Research Appropriations:** ACS CAN will advocate for New York State to establish a state cancer research program. By committing the full strength of the Empire State to investing in cancer research, the state can help find cures for the disease and bring jobs and economic activity to New York, while making New York a global center for cancer research.

Cancer Prevention and Early Detection

- **Breast, Cervical and Colorectal Cancer:** ACS CAN will advocate for a **\$2.5 million** increase in funding for the New York State Cancer Services Program, the state breast, cervical and colorectal cancer screening and treatment program for low-income uninsured and underinsured women and men administered by the New York State Department of Health. The increase would bring the total annualized appropriation to **\$22.325 million**.
- **Lung Cancer:** ACS CAN will advocate for legislation reforming prior authorization for lung cancer screening to ensure that it should be as timely, efficient and standardized as possible and appropriate funding for lung cancer screening education and outreach. ACS CAN will also advocate for legislation to add lung cancer to the list of cancers for which treatment can be provided by the NYS Medicaid Cancer Treatment Program. Currently only breast, cervical, colorectal, and prostate cancer are included.
- **HPV:** ACS CAN will advocate for legislation to increase the uptake of the HPV vaccine including strengthening school vaccination requirements and appropriating funding for HPV vaccine education and administration focused on the importance of vaccination for all New Yorkers and combatting disinformation efforts.

Reducing the Toll of Tobacco

- **Tobacco Taxes:** As New York State works to identify funding strategies to reduce the budget deficit and fund critical programs, ACS CAN will advocate for legislation establishing tax parity across all tobacco products—cigarettes, smokeless tobacco, cigars, e-cigarettes and more—which would discourage youth initiation and incentivize people who currently use to quit, while also generating revenue for the New York State Tobacco Control Program. **\$7.5 million** of the revenue generated after establishing tobacco tax parity should be used to fund and sustain fact-based, statewide tobacco prevention and cessation programs.
- **Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Funding:** ACS CAN will work to increase funding for fact-based, statewide tobacco prevention and cessation programs to **\$46.7 million**. Increased funding will allow the program to expand its cessation services in targeted communities, and increase community outreach efforts at a time when shifting federal priorities are putting public health at risk
- **Access to Tobacco Cessation:** ACS CAN will advocate for all insurance plans, including the state Medicaid program, to provide a comprehensive cessation benefit that covers individual, group, and telephone counseling and all FDA-approved tobacco cessation medications without cost-sharing or other barriers to accessing care.
- **Menthol Cigarettes and All Other Flavored Tobacco Products:** ACS CAN supports legislation to end the sale of menthol cigarettes and all other flavored tobacco products. Comprehensive policies to end the sale of flavored tobacco products must include all tobacco products, all flavors, and all tobacco retailers.

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