



ACS CAN MICHIGAN REPORT

SPRING / SUMMER 2020

Since March, Michigan has been in a standstill, with the rest of the nation, as COVID-19 has changed our lives forever. The work of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network has not stopped as we continue to work with our policy makers to ensure that those facing cancer still have a voice. Lets review the work done over the past spring and summer.

Michigan, COVID - 19, and ACS CAN

Michigan stood still in March as COVID-19 began to make its way across the country, hitting Michigan and the greater Detroit area the hardest. The ACS CAN staff in Michigan began to act quickly to ensure that we could continue to protect those facing cancer in Michigan. Discussions began with Governor Whitmer's administration along with legislative leaders to bring policy issues to the forefront that could provide those protections for cancer patients.

Though the stay at home orders in Michigan slowly began to be lifted we continued to ask for caution. We were concerned that opening too soon could endanger those facing cancer. We continue to work with the administration, partners in the health care industry, and others to ensure that we have safe environments for patients to continue their fight.

Oral Chemotherapy Fairness Update

COVID-19 has added yet another reason why oral treatments, that can be taken from the safety of one's home, are essential for cancer patients. Michigan still lacks the basic access protections for Oral Chemotherapy Fairness. Discussions between ACS CAN, outside partners, and House leadership about the importance of this issue have begun. We have been able to share stories from patients along with polling data from ACS CAN on how COVID is affecting patients in Michigan and nationally. House leadership has been receptive to our information and are continuing to discuss a path forward.

As we move into the summer and fall we will begin to increase our efforts to educate and push the legislation through the process. Please stay connected with ACS CAN for opportunities to engage your lawmakers on this critically needed policy change.

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Tobacco Industries Efforts to Addict Michigan's Kids

Tobacco issues and regulation continues to be an issue that the legislature is interested in working on. The tobacco industry has been pushing a series of bills, Senate Bills 781-786 that would make changes to Michigan tobacco laws and weaken the state's ability to regulate this industry. These bills make changes in licensure for retailers and taxation. These changes are either unenforceable or have no effect on turning people away from these dangerous products.

The Senate passed the tobacco industries package. The Senate regulatory reform committee did take some amendments offered from the Keep MI Kids Tobacco Free Alliance, a group which we are a part of, but still made them weaker in the process as well. The bills are now in the House regulatory reform committee where they will be reviewed over the summer. A timeline for action has not been given by the chair of the committee yet.

Cancer Action Month

Nearly 130 volunteers with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) from across the state of Michigan took part in a virtual Cancer Action Month in June. Most notably, among the variety of virtual advocacy activities, was video conference calls with State Senate and House members. 85 volunteers met via video conference and shared their support of Oral Chemotherapy Fairness legislation and Tobacco reform.

In addition to virtual meetings, almost 200 other volunteers and ACS CAN supporters sent emails or made calls to the offices sharing the same message. Added to the thousands of social media reaches and engagements, actions taken during Michigan's first ever Cancer Action Month has proven to be a success for advancing the voice of Michiganders facing cancer.



Other Issues

- The CANDid Connection Podcast is live, go to our Facebook page to see our monthly updates on things happening in Lansing!

As always if you have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out to Ashley or Andrew at ashley.wakefield@cancer.org and andrew.schepers@cancer.org

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