

2017 Legislative Priorities in Tennessee



IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE

Support SB1170/HB629 (Hensley/Kumar) to create a palliative care task force

- Create a State Task Force on Palliative Care and Quality of Life, to promote patient-centered and family-focused palliative care in Tennessee.
- Palliative care improves the quality of life of cancer patients and cancer survivors, saving lives and reducing health care costs

Support passage of Cancer Treatment Fairness Act HB1059 (Lamberth) and SB 922 (Ketron)

- Equalizes out-of-pocket costs for intravenous and oral chemotherapy drugs.
- The out-of-pocket cost difference between IV and oral chemotherapy can restrict patient access to lifesaving therapies and lead patients to make treatment decisions based on cost rather than a doctor's recommendation.

TOBACCO PREVENTION AND CONTROL

Support passage of SB303/HB102 (Ketron/Ramsey) that creates an option for local authorities to pass smoke-free ordinances, to save lives and reduce the death and disease caused by exposure to secondhand smoke.

- Preemptive state laws have a devastating effect on tobacco control efforts and on the public health of the states' residents.
- Local governments have the right and responsibility to respond to the needs and concerns of their communities. However, when it comes to limiting exposure to secondhand smoke, local communities are specifically preempted from taking action.
- According to the U.S. Surgeon General, there is no safe level of exposure to secondhand smoke. Secondhand smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals and about 70 are known to cause cancer. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has classified secondhand smoke as a Group A carcinogen, a substance which is known to cause human cancer.

PROTECT LEGISLATION AND PROGRAMS THAT REDUCE THE CANCER BURDEN IN TENNESSEE

- Maintain state funding for smoking cessation services for TennCare enrollees to help smokers kick the addiction and reduce downstream tobacco-related health care costs.
- The Tennessee Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening Program provides mammograms and Pap tests for approximately only 16 percent of the 85,000 women eligible for the program. Every woman eligible deserves access to mammograms and Pap tests to screen for breast and cervical cancer because early detection saves lives. Maintain this funding.

ACCESS TO CARE

Ensure that cancer patients, survivors, and those at risk for cancer have access to comprehensive, quality health insurance coverage.

- Access to health insurance coverage has a direct bearing on our ability to reduce the cancer burden.
- Access to comprehensive health insurance coverage is particularly important for the 37,650 Tennesseans projected to be diagnosed with cancer in 2016 and the estimated 298,950 Tennesseans who are cancer survivors.
- Uninsured and underinsured patients are more likely than those with insurance to be diagnosed with cancer at advanced stages and more likely to die from the disease.

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