

# Tennessee 2026

## Legislative Asks & Talking Points



### **1 ASK: Support HB484/SB435, a bill to increase access to comprehensive biomarker testing that can help ensure patients get the right treatment at the right time.**

- Last year, it is estimated that over 42,000 Tennesseans were diagnosed with cancer.
- Biomarker testing is often used to determine the best treatment for a patient, helping them get the most effective treatment for their individual disease, bypassing treatment that may be ineffective.
- Biomarker testing is analysis of a patient's tissue, blood, or other biospecimen for the presence of a biomarker (e.g. KRAS). The results can help determine the best treatment plan for a specific patient, including the use of precision medicine.
- Progress in improving cancer outcomes increasingly involves the use of precision medicine.
- Biomarker testing is used in the treatment of cancer, as well as a number of other conditions including Alzheimer's, preeclampsia, arthritis, and more. Research is happening in many other areas, and biomarker testing may become increasingly important to the treatment of other diseases like ALS and Parkinsons Disease.
- In Tennessee, insurance coverage is failing to keep pace with innovations in testing and treatment, which can leave patients without access to the testing that they need. Patients in rural areas and without an academic medical center are being left behind.
- Improving access to biomarker testing can help to achieve better health outcomes, improve quality of life, and reduced costs.

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### **2 Ask: Support sustained funding for the Tennessee Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Program.**

- Tobacco prevention and cessation is one of the smartest and most fiscally responsible investments that Tennessee can make, as smoking now directly causes \$3.10 billion in health care costs annually in our state.
- This funding not only can help individuals quit smoking, but also prevents our kids from ever starting a lifetime of addiction to tobacco.
- It is especially important since Tennessee has the 3rd highest adult smoking rate in the country and ranks 3rd in smoking-attributable cancer deaths.
- Sustained funding is imperative this year, with the future of \$1.7 million in federal funds being uncertain with the uncertain future of the national Office of Smoking and Health.
- Examples of what the program does:
  - Provides cessation resources to those who want to quit
    - Nicotine Replacement Therapy (gums, patches)
    - Quitline support program
  - Trainings for school administrators to help identify youth use and use evidence-based programs to help youth quit tobacco and nicotine products.
  - Hosts TNSTRONG, a statewide, youth-led community engagement program that empowers youth to raise awareness around the harms of tobacco and nicotine products.
  - Provides parents and communities with resources to support children in being or becoming tobacco free.

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### **3 Ask: Support a \$4 million funding increase for the Tennessee Breast and Cervical Screening Program**

- The Tennessee Breast and Cervical Screening Program (TBCSP) helps low-income, uninsured and underinsured women gain access to timely breast and cervical cancer screening and diagnostic services. These include mammograms, Pap tests, and HPV tests.
- The increase in funding is imperative as healthcare costs continue to rise and more Tennesseans are predicted to become underinsured and uninsured.
- From 2019–2024 the TBCSP served over 49,332 women, detected over 718 invasive breast cancers and over 2,235 invasive cervical cancers.
- The program has over 400 vendors across the state, but demand remains high and many Tennesseans go unserved.
- Last year, an estimated 6,960 women in Tennessee were diagnosed with breast cancer and an estimated 1,040 would die from the disease.
- Cancers found at an early stage are easier to treat, cost less, and lead to greater survival.