

2026 Washington State Legislative Priorities

Victory in the fight against cancer requires bold public policy solutions that promote cancer prevention, increase early detection of cancer, expand access to quality, affordable health care, reduce disparities, and advance health equity. Lawmakers make many decisions that impact the lives of Washington 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 Washington Legislature on 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.
- **Access to Biomarker Testing – HB 1062:** ACS CAN will advocate for improved coverage of comprehensive biomarker testing. Progress in improving cancer outcomes increasingly involves the use of precision medicine, which uses information about a person's own genes or proteins to better diagnose and treat diseases like cancer. Biomarker testing is an important step to accessing precision medicine which includes targeted therapies that can lead to improved survivorship and better quality of life for cancer patients, but insurance coverage for biomarker testing is failing to keep pace with innovations and advancements in testing and treatment. **Washington is falling behind.** Twenty-two states – including California, Arizona, Louisiana, New York, Texas and Minnesota have enacted similar legislation to expand coverage of biomarker testing across disease types with strong bipartisan support.
- **Affordable, Adequate Health Insurance – Protecting Cascade Care:** Washington's Cascade Care program offers patients a vital alternative to health plans that feature high out-of-pocket costs and limited coverage. For those battling cancer, financial concerns should not be added to the stress of treatment. The Cascade Care program provides more comprehensive plans with lower financial barriers, ensuring patients can access the critical services they need for their recovery.
- **Reduce Patient Medical Debt – SB 5993: Prohibiting Interest on Medical Debt & SB6105: Raising the Exemption of Wage Garnishment for Medical Debt:** Nearly half (47%) of cancer patients and survivors we've surveyed have had medical debt related to their cancer. The health implications are significant: those with cancer-related medical debt are three times more likely to be behind on recommended cancer screening. ACS CAN will support efforts to reduce the burden of medical debt on patients and their families.

- **Fertility Preservation – HB 1129/SB 5121 & SB 6202:** Some cancer treatments can cause infertility, and as a result, individuals with cancer may choose to preserve their fertility prior to treatment. Failure to preserve fertility is a common regret that may affect survivors' quality of life. ACS CAN supports legislation that would provide cancer patients with health insurance coverage for fertility preservation consistent with recommended medical guidelines.

Cancer Prevention and Early Detection

- **Breast and Cervical Cancer:** ACS CAN will advocate to maintain and protect funding of The Washington State Breast, Cervical, and Colon Health Program (BCCHP) for low-income uninsured and underinsured women administered by the Washington Department of Health.
 - **Colorectal Cancer Screenings:** ACS CAN will work to restore funding for colorectal cancer screening through the Washington State Breast, Cervical, and Colon Health Program.

Reducing the Toll of Tobacco

- **Tobacco Taxes – HB 2382/SB 6129:** As Washington works to identify funding strategies to reduce the budget deficit and to fund critical programs, ACS CAN will advocate to increase the cigarette tax by at least \$2.00 per pack with a parallel tax on all other tobacco products including e-cigarettes. Increasing the price of cigarettes and all other tobacco products through regular and significant tobacco tax increases helps prevent kids from starting to use tobacco and helps support people who are trying to quit. \$10 million of the revenue from the tobacco tax increase should be used to fund and sustain evidence-based, statewide tobacco prevention and cessation programs.
 - **Tobacco Prevention and Cessation Funding** ACS CAN will advocate to increase sustaining program funding for evidence-based, statewide tobacco prevention and cessation programs at an increase of \$10 million/year, only a percentage of the CDC recommended funding level of \$63 million for Washington state. This program prevents kids from starting to use tobacco and helps those who are trying to quit.

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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. Also see our Washington State website for local information, www.fightcancer.org/washington