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American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network



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Chairman Suellentrop and members of the Committee:

The American Cancer Society Action Network (ACS CAN) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the SB 252. ACS CAN, the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society, supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. As the nation's leading advocate for public policies that are helping to defeat cancer, ACS CAN ensures that cancer patients, survivors, and their families have a voice in public policy matters at all levels of government. Access to quality health care directly affects people's ability to prevent, detect, and survive cancer. **The sad reality is that too much cancer death and suffering is attributable to gaps in our health care system.**

Health insurance is a critical tool in treating and surviving a cancer diagnosis. American Cancer Society research shows that insured patients are more likely to catch cancer in an earlier stage when treatment is less expensive, and survival is more likely. But currently, thousands of Kansans, the majority of whom are working, are without the insurance coverage necessary to access and afford routine screenings, preventive care, or cancer treatment should they be diagnosed. It is critical that lawmakers work together during the 2020 session to pass SB 252 to expand the state's Medicaid program up to 138% of the federal poverty level. **Passage of SB 252 will ensure that thousands of low-income Kansans have access to lifesaving health insurance coverage that includes screening, diagnostic and cancer treatment care.**

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) wants to ensure that cancer patients, survivors and those who will be diagnosed with cancer have adequate access to care and coverage under the Medicaid program, and that SB 252 does not get amended to create administrative barriers to care for low-income Kansans. Maintaining access to quality, affordable, accessible, and comprehensive health care coverage and services is a matter of life and survivorship for thousands of low-income cancer patients and survivors and ACS CAN is committed to ensuring that all Kansans eligible for the state's Medicaid program are positioned to win the fight against cancer.

ACS CAN supports SB 252 because it will allow Kansans facing cancer to get the care they need when they need it regardless of their ability to work or pay a monthly premium. Work requirements and lockout periods for non-payment of premiums erect costly administrative barriers to lifesaving and life changing cancer screenings, diagnostic testing and treatment services. The work referral program and premium structure contained in SB 252 are more patient friendly than requirements that have been enacted in other states. Work requirements are problematic for cancer patients and survivors as treatment often comes with side effects, some of which can be serious or debilitating. Treating physicians may advise cancer patients against working during treatment to avoid risk of infection, to have time to heal, and for other reasons. Although work requirement exemptions are often available for those with chronic health

conditions, the administrative complexity of constantly reporting work or health status could still lead to thousands of people losing their Medicaid coverage – including those who should be exempt.

In addition to the patient-friendly work referral program included in SB 252, ACS CAN is encouraged that lawmakers are seeking a reinsurance program to stabilize the individual health insurance market and keep out of pocket costs manageable for Kansans who need access to coverage to treat and survive cancer. Medicaid expansion paired with a reinsurance program could have a substantial positive impact on the health insurance market in our state, attracting more young and healthy people and diversifying the risk pool in a way that protects cancer patients, survivors and other Kansans living with pre-existing conditions from being priced out of coverage.

We urge continued collaboration and swift action to pass SB 252, a bipartisan Kansas solution that accomplishes the goal of providing health insurance to those who do not currently have access, saving lives from diseases like cancer, and improving the health of our state. With these goals in mind, we discourage lawmakers from including provisions or policy components that would delay access or create undue barriers for those who have already waited too long to have access to health coverage.