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**Proponent Testimony HB 11  
House Finance Committee  
June 19, 2019**

Chairman Oelslager, Vice Chair Scherer, Ranking Member Cera, and members of the House Finance Committee:

We appreciate the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 11, which passed the House Health Committee last week.

The Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids is the nation's largest non-profit organization dedicated to preventing and reducing tobacco-use, eliminating exposure to secondhand smoke and helping tobacco users who want to quit. We strongly support HB 11 which would provide barrier-free access to proven tools to help Ohio citizens quit smoking. Requiring Medicaid (both fee-for-service and managed care organizations) and the state employee health plan to cover treatments recommended by the United States Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) for tobacco cessation, including all seven Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved medications and all three forms of counseling, will save lives and taxpayer dollars. Comprehensive cessation coverage is proven to increase quit rates and is cost-effective.

Smoking takes a tremendous toll on Ohio's health and economy. Each year, smoking kills over 20,000 Ohioans and accounts for over \$5.6 billion per year in health care expenditures, including \$1.7 billion in Medicaid costs. Our smoking rate is one of the highest in the nation. According to the CDC, more than 21.1% of Ohio adults smoke, far above the national smoking rate of 14%.

Fortunately, in Ohio, nearly 80% of smokers want to quit and over half made a quit attempt in the past year. Unfortunately, due to treatment barriers, many smokers in Ohio lack true access to the treatments recommended by their providers. Legislation to remove complicated barriers to care, like step therapy and prior authorization, which unnecessarily delay access to treatment, is critically important. Providers, not insurers, should determine patient care.

Covering all USPSTF recommended treatments ensures patients have the best chance to successfully quit smoking. Given the significant toll tobacco use takes on our collective health, our communities and our workforce, it only makes sense that Ohio smokers who want to quit should have barrier-free access to the tools they need to be successful.

This legislation would also make financial sense. Massachusetts realized a 26% drop in its Medicaid smoking rate after the state implemented and promoted a comprehensive Medicaid cessation benefit. This in turn led to a 46% decrease in hospitalizations for heart attacks and a 49% decrease in hospitalizations for cardiovascular disease. In the end, estimates show the state saved more than \$3 for every \$1 it spent to help Medicaid beneficiaries quit smoking. It's time to replicate this type of success in Ohio.

We look forward to working with you to give people covered by Ohio's Medicaid program and state employee health plan will give a substantial number of Ohio's smokers a fighting chance when it comes to quitting. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy M. Barkley". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Amy M. Barkley  
Regional Advocacy Director, Tobacco States and Mid-Atlantic  
(OH, KY, TN, WV, VA, SC, NC, GA, DC, MD, DE)