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Cancer Action Network  
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**Proponent Testimony – HB 110, Tobacco Control Funding  
House Finance Subcommittee on Health and Medicaid  
Bryan Hannon, ACS CAN Ohio  
March 3, 2021**

Chair Roemer, Ranking Member West and Members of the Subcommittee on Health and Medicaid:

On behalf of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the biennial budget – House Bill 110 – which we believe can help address Ohio’s cancer burden.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many Ohioans to prioritize their health and ACS CAN is committed to working with policymakers to building stronger public health infrastructure including for our communities. That is why ACS CAN supports Governor DeWine’s proposed increase of \$2.5 million per year for the Tobacco Use Prevention Cessation and Enforcement Fund over the next biennium and the flat funding for Ohio’s Breast & Cervical Cancer Program.

**Tobacco Control Funding**

Ohio has one of the highest adult smoking rates and e-cigarette use rates in the nation. These high rates of tobacco use take a toll on the health of Ohioans. In fact, smoking is responsible for an estimated 30 percent of cancer deaths in Ohio.<sup>i</sup> People who smoke or who used to smoke are at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19. Smoking is also a proven risk factor for cancer, COPD and heart disease, which also put people at increased risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

Unfortunately, the tobacco pandemic is not limited to adults. Here in Ohio, 4.6 percent of high school students smoke cigarettes, 5.4 percent smoke cigars, and 30 percent use electronic cigarettes.<sup>ii</sup> Action is needed to reverse these trends. Because the tobacco industry is evolving and to help Ohio reduce the devastating health impact of cancer and other tobacco-related disease, it is more important than ever that the state invest in programs that prevent kids from starting to use tobacco and help others who are already addicted to quit.

Ohio’s comprehensive tobacco control program is currently funded at \$12 million annually,<sup>iii</sup> which is just 9% of what the CDC recommends for an effective program in Ohio.<sup>iv</sup> **ACS CAN encourages you to increase funding to \$14.5 million per year, as proposed in Governor DeWine’s budget, as a first step towards funding a successful program.** According to projections developed by the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, investing \$2.5 million more in tobacco prevention programs would help hundreds of youth avoid a lifetime of tobacco addiction, prevent more than 200 premature tobacco-related deaths and generate nearly \$15 million in health care costs savings. We believe this is a sound investment.

**Breast & Cervical Cancer Funding**

The Ohio Breast & Cervical Cancer Project is a critical safety net program that provides free mammograms, cervical exams and other prevention services to more than 7,000 low-income Ohioans each year.

Nearly 80,000 Ohio women are eligible for BCCP services each year and the COVID-19 pandemic will likely cause demand for the program to grow in the coming years. Last spring, mammography rates declined by 70 percent because of the pandemic<sup>v</sup>, causing a backlog of preventative screenings, or, the risk that many people will forego their screenings altogether. Furthermore, the pandemic has taken an economic toll on Ohioans, causing some to lose insurance or income. For these reasons, screening services offered through the BCCP will be a critical resource for thousands of Ohioans.

Governor DeWine's proposed budget has maintained flat funding for this program at \$1.021 million per year over the biennium. We urge lawmakers to maintain this funding to ensure the BCCP can continue to offer lifesaving screenings to those most in need.

### **Smoke-free Air**

We also support new language in HB 110 (Sec. 3794.01) that would incorporate e-cigarettes into Ohio's smoke-free air law. The evidence is clear: comprehensive smoke-free laws increase tobacco cessation<sup>vi</sup> and ACS CAN believes that all tobacco products, including e-cigarettes, should be included in smoke-free laws.

E-cigarette use is on the rise and Ohio's adult e-cigarette use rate is among the highest in the nation at 5.3 percent. Studies have shown that e-cigarettes pose a health risk to users, including causing changes and irritations to the lungs. But e-cigarettes can also pose a risk to nonusers who are exposed to toxins in secondhand aerosol. Harmful chemicals, heavy metals and other constituents have been found in the aerosol of e-cigarettes.<sup>vii</sup>

No one should be exposed to potentially harmful aerosols in their workplace and that is why ACS CAN supports the inclusion of e-cigarettes into the smoke-free law, as proposed in HB 110.

### **Conclusion**

Ohio's next biennial budget provides an important opportunity for the fight against cancer. Increasing funding for tobacco prevention by \$2.5 million per year, maintaining funding for the Breast & Cervical Project, and including e-cigarettes into the smoke-free air law will ensure we prevent more Ohioans from hearing the words "you have cancer."

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<sup>i</sup> American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. [State-Specific Smoking-Related Cancer Cases and Deaths, 2017](#). December 2020.

<sup>iii</sup> The Truth Initiative, et al (2019).

<sup>iv</sup> CDC, 2014.

<sup>v</sup> <https://www.rand.org/news/press/2020/11/05.html>

<sup>vi</sup> Centers for Disease Control & Prevention. Smokefree Policies Reduce Smoking. [Cdc.org/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets](http://cdc.org/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets). Accessed 2.26.2021

<sup>vii</sup> Sleiman M, et al. Emissions from Electronic Cigarettes: Key Parameters Affecting the Release of Harmful Chemicals. *Environmental Science & Technology* 2016; 50 (1&) 9644-9651.