



American Cancer Society  
Cancer Action Network  
10501 Euclid Avenue  
Cleveland, OH 44106  
[www.fightcancer.org/Ohio](http://www.fightcancer.org/Ohio)

**House Bill 110 Testimony  
Senate Finance Committee  
Bryan Hannon, ACS CAN Ohio  
May 13, 2021**

Chairman Dolan, Vice Chair Gavarone, Ranking Member Sykes & Members of the Committee:

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.

**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 passed in the House 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**

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. Some qualified women who are diagnosed with cancer through the program are then navigated to special Medicaid coverage – Medicaid Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Program – for the duration of their treatment.

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.

### *Funding*

The House-passed budget has maintained level funding for this program at \$1.021 million per year over the biennium. We urge lawmakers to at least maintain this funding to ensure the BCCP can continue to offer lifesaving screenings to those most in need.

### *Fixing the “Wrong Door” in BCCP*

Currently, before an individual is qualified for Medicaid Breast and Cervical Cancer Treatment Program, they must receive their screening through a BCCP provider and have their screening paid for with BCCP funds. This means, for instance, that a woman who received a screening at a BCCP provider but whose screening was paid for with foundation dollars or some other funding source, would not be eligible to receive cancer treatment through Medicaid.

Women who enter through this “wrong door” may be left in a coverage gap, delaying their treatment, or worsening their prognosis. That is why we support an amendment to HB 110 that would extend Medicaid coverage to any woman who was screened through the “wrong door” but who otherwise would be eligible for the Medicaid Breast and Cervical Treatment Program.

### **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.