

February 11, 2004

House Committee on Health and Welfare
SB 2538

Chairman and Members of the Committee:

My name is Gwendolyn Cargnel, Director of Government Relations for the American Cancer Society. I represent over 270,000 volunteers and supporters in Kansas, and on their behalf, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak in support House Bill 2538.

House Bill 2538 will establish a Drug Repository Program for the State of Kansas. This program will accept unused, unopened, individually packaged prescription drugs from nursing homes and individuals to be redistributed through pharmacies, that have volunteered to participate, to low-income Kansans.

Often when a person passes away their loved ones are forced to throw away hundreds of dollars worth of medication that could save the life of a fellow Kansan. Many times patients with life threatening illnesses cannot afford the medications they need. The Drug Repository Program could provide low-income and uninsured Kansans access to life-saving medications.

This year almost 13,000 Kansans will be diagnosed with cancer and more than 5,300 will die. According to a 2003 report by the Institute of Medicine, poverty is the most critical factor affecting health and longevity. This program will provide a mechanism to help eliminate the disparity in the cancer burden for the socioeconomically disadvantaged population.

This is a population that often goes without proper treatment and proper medication. I urge this Committee to recommend HB 2538 for passage to the House.