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American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

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Chairwoman Landwehr and members of the Committee:

The American Cancer Society Action Network (ACS CAN) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Senate proposal for expanding Medicaid and access to care more broadly. 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 over the coming months and during the 2020 session to pass legislation that will expand the state's Medicaid program up to 138% of the federal poverty level. Passage of Medicaid expansion will ensure that thousands of low-income Kansans have access to lifesaving health insurance coverage that includes screening, diagnostic and cancer treatment care.

The Senate proposal contains a number of components that would positively impact health in Kansas. Because of our overall mission to prevent cancer, the inclusion of a tobacco tax increase is of particular interest to ACS CAN. By significantly increasing the tax on cigarettes with a comparable tax on other tobacco products including electronic smoking devices, the state would experience a significant positive health impact and savings in health care costs. ACS CAN recommends the consideration of a tobacco tax **only** if it exceeds \$1.00/pack of cigarettes and brings the tax on other tobacco products including electronic smoking devices in line with the new cigarette tax amount. Small tobacco tax increases are ineffective at preventing young people from initiating use of a tobacco product and do not have the benefit of reducing use among those who currently smoke. It is critical that all products, cigarettes and other tobacco products including electronic smoking devices, be addressed comprehensively and at the same time so there are not pricing gaps that consequentially move users from one product to another.

We commend Kansas lawmakers for coming together to have robust discussions on what expanded Medicaid should look like in our state. As you continue your work, we urge the members of the committee to consider the impact that this expansion plan will have on cancer patients, survivors and those individuals who will face a cancer diagnosis. One initial area of



concern with the proposal is regarding the lockout period for nonpayment, a policy that could jeopardize the health of low-income Kansans with cancer. Should an individual undergoing cancer treatment miss two monthly payments, they would likely be disenrolled from the program and locked out of their health insurance coverage for a period of six months. Being denied access to one's cancer care team for six months could be a matter of life or death for a cancer patient or survivor and the financial toll that this penalty period would have on individuals and their families could be devastating.

ACS CAN recommends that this lockout period be modified, to include exemptions and a clearly defined appeals process, so that Kansans who have the greatest health care needs are not at risk of a coverage loss because of their inability to pay.

We urge continued collaboration and swift action during the legislative session to pass a version of expansion 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.

