

May 9, 2022

Health and Human Services Conference Committee



RE: SF 4410 – Health and Human Services Omnibus Bill

Chair Abeler, Chair Liebling and members of the HHS Conference Committee:

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is committed to reducing the pain and suffering from cancer in Minnesota. It is with these goals in mind that we provide the following comments on both the Senate and House Health and Human Services omnibus budget bills.

1. ACS CAN supports removing barriers to commercial tobacco cessation treatment (House Article 3, Section 28).

This language would remove barriers to commercial tobacco cessation treatment for Medical Assistance and MinnesotaCare enrollees, ensuring more Minnesotans have a comprehensive cessation benefit that covers individual, group, and telephone counseling and all FDA-approved tobacco cessation medications without barriers like prior authorization. The small fiscal note (\$79k over three years) will likely be offset by future health care savings; helping Minnesotans quit costs a fraction of what it takes to treat tobacco-related diseases.

2. ACS CAN supports modifying the definition of palliative care in state statute (House Article 2, Sec. 28, Senate Article 13, Sec. 8).

Thank you to the Senate and House for including this language in both omnibus bills. Palliative care is specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses that is focused on providing patients with relief from the symptoms, pain, and stress of a serious illness. It helps both the patient and family and is appropriate at any age and any stage. However, Minnesota state statute defines palliative care as end-of-life care. A correct and comprehensive definition can help in clarifying to providers and patients that palliative care is not synonymous with end-of-life care.

3. ACS CAN supports funding for the Minnesota Palliative Care Advisory Council (House).

The House Health Omnibus would fund the Palliative Care Advisory Council at \$44k in FY23 and \$88k in the FY24/25 biennium. The Palliative Care Advisory Council (PCAC) was established in 2017 with strong bipartisan support to identify ways to expand access and remove barriers to palliative care. PCAC examined the state of palliative care in Minnesota and has issued several legislative reports on increasing equitable access to palliative care.

4. ACS CAN supports modifications to the Cancer Reporting System (House Article 2, Section 14).

ACS CAN supports House language that would allow Minnesota to share its cancer data with other state and national cancer registries, which will make sure our researchers have the data they need to find new cures and treatments and ensure federal funding continues to come into our state to support the fight against cancer.

Thank you for your continued leadership on issues important in the fight against cancer. We look forward to supporting your efforts in the weeks ahead to ensure this language is included in any final health omnibus bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Emily Myatt'.

Emily Myatt
Minnesota Government Relations Director
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network