

American Cancer Society Cancer Action: Reacts to budget outcome, moves to policy priorities

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Madison, Wisconsin – The American Cancer Society Cancer Action is giving mixed reviews to the final Wisconsin Biennial Budget and looking ahead to an important policy issue for lawmakers to address.

“We are relieved and proud that two important programs, the Wisconsin Well Woman Program and the Tobacco Prevention and Control Program, maintained their funding at current levels,” said Sara Sahli, ACS CAN Wisconsin government relations director. “But, I am left wondering why the legislature could not see that cigarettes wrapped in brown paper should be taxed at the same rate as those wrapped in white paper. Closing this loophole had strong bipartisan support in both chambers and 26 health organizations advocating for its passage. We’ll keep working to expand understanding of how a low price encourages children and other new users to pick up a deadly habit.”

The legislature now moves to addressing policy issues. ACS CAN is encouraging lawmakers to schedule hearings on a bill with 41 bipartisan co-sponsors that would address store placement of tobacco products. Current law requires cigarettes to be sold from behind a store counter, but other tobacco products such as little cigars, cigarillos and e-cigarette juice can be sold in front of the counter or on the store floor. The placement increases their visibility to young users, who are attracted to their fun colors and candy flavors.

“This is a serious problem that has a common sense and easy solution,” said Sahli. “The same logic that explains why we don’t want children to browse cigarettes applies to these products, only more so. The flavors alone – chocolate, cotton candy, cherry – attract youngsters. We think behind the counter is the right place for all tobacco products, not next to the chips, cereal and candy.”

Sahli is available for interview. Contact Jennifer Amundson to schedule.

About ACS CAN

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. ACS CAN works to encourage elected officials and candidates to make cancer a top national priority. ACS CAN gives ordinary people extraordinary power to fight cancer with the training and tools they need to make their voices heard. For more information, visit www.acscan.org.

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