

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network: Advocates Mark Great American Smokeout by calling for action to prevent tobacco addiction

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MADISON, WI – November 21, 2019 – Cancer patients and survivors marked the American Cancer Society's (ACS) 44th annual Great American Smokeout today by calling on state lawmakers to protect the health of Wisconsin residents by passing strong tobacco control legislation. Only by tackling tobacco use through a comprehensive approach can we effectively overcome the country's tobacco use epidemic and prevent the more than 480,000 deaths each year caused by smoking and exposure to secondhand smoke.

The advocacy affiliate of ACS, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), supports evidence-based strategies proven to reduce tobacco use including comprehensive smoke-free laws, regular and significant tobacco excise tax increases and adequately funding evidence-based tobacco prevention and cessation programs.

This effort to combat tobacco addiction comes at a critical moment, as Big Tobacco has now succeeded in hooking a new generation on tobacco products. E-cigarette use has reached epidemic levels among youth, with more than one in four high school students (27.5%) currently using e-cigarettes. It is critical that state lawmakers provide additional funding for the state's Tobacco Prevention and Control Program. This program educates Wisconsinites on the dangers of tobacco use and gives them the tools to quit, through services like the quit line. With the

explosive growth in youth addiction, our state needs this program more than ever.

“Nearly 70% of people who currently smoke cigarettes want to quit, and the Great American Smokeout is about helping people reach that important goal. We know increasing Wisconsin’s funding for tobacco prevention and cessation programs will help people quit and save lives,” said Sara Sahli, government relations director for ACS. “By investing in prevention and cessation, lawmakers can prevent our kids from using tobacco products and help ensure Wisconsinites who smoke have access to lifesaving programs to help them quit.”

According to the 2014 Surgeon General’s report, while smoking has declined over the last 50 years since the first report linking smoking to devastating diseases like cancer, cigarettes have since become more deadly and the risk of disease and death caused by smoking has not declined. In fact, smoking is now linked to at least 15 types of cancers, including liver and colorectal cancers, and people who smoke today have a higher risk of lung cancer than people who smoked 50 years ago.

“The youth e-cigarette use epidemic should serve as a stark reminder that we have a long way to go when it comes to combatting Big Tobacco’s influence and protecting our communities from tobacco’s toll,” said Sahli. “In Wisconsin, we must do more to reduce tobacco use and save lives by providing additional funding for tobacco prevention programs and cessation services.

The use of tobacco products remains the nation’s number one cause of preventable death, killing more than 480,000 Americans and costing \$289 billion in health care costs and lost productivity annually. In Wisconsin, tobacco is responsible for 7,900 deaths each year.

About ACS CAN

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is making cancer a top priority for public officials and candidates at the federal, state and local levels. ACS CAN empowers advocates across the country to make their voices heard and influence evidence-based public policy change as well as legislative and regulatory solutions that will reduce the cancer burden. As the American Cancer Society’s nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate, ACS CAN is critical to the fight for a world without cancer. For more information, visit www.fightcancer.org.