



2012 NEW MEXICO STATE LEGISLATIVE ACCOMPLISHMENTS

September 2012

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society. We support evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. During the 60-day session of the New Mexico Legislature, important cancer-related programs were largely protected despite a very difficult economic environment where many state funded programs were cut. Thanks to all of our wonderful and dedicated volunteers we were able accomplish the following:

Protecting Cancer Patient Access to Pain Management – ACS CAN members successfully opposed a bill that sought to seriously complicate the way certain pain medications, specifically opioids, are prescribed and dispensed. The bill would have had a potentially devastating impact on many cancer patients across the state who rely on these medications to help ease their pain and enable them to complete their treatments, get through their daily routines, and appreciate time spent with family and friends.

Protecting Tobacco Control Program Funding – ACS CAN members opposed any attempts by the state of New Mexico to take money from tobacco use prevention and cessation programs managed by the New Mexico Department of Health and the Indian Affairs Department. These programs are paid for by revenues from the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement – and not state taxpayer money. The net effect of these programs in the last decade is that 81,400 fewer adults are smoking now in New Mexico. State funding for our Tobacco Use Prevention and Control Programs remains level for state fiscal year 2013, after suffering cuts the preceding two years.

Defending Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection and Treatment Funding – We were successful in defending funding for early detection and treatment of breast and cervical cancer for uninsured and underinsured women of New Mexico. State funding for the early detection program and the treatment program remain level for state fiscal year 2013, after being cut the preceding two years.

Tobacco Tax Loophole – We supported a bill that would have raised the tax on non-cigarette tobacco products, equalizing it with the cigarette tax rate. Increasing the tax on cigars, chewing tobacco, snuff and loose tobacco would put these harmful and highly addictive products a little further out of reach of New Mexico kids. The current tax discrepancy between different types of tobacco interferes with tobacco cessation efforts – and the tobacco companies exploit this loophole for that reason – and is detrimental to New Mexico youth. The bill was not adopted by the 2012 state legislature.

Protecting the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement – ACS CAN supported a bill to help ensure that the Master Settlement Agreement between tobacco companies and the state is fully enforced in New Mexico, enabling the state to collect settlement payments from all tobacco companies selling within our borders and thus inhibit the predatory pricing strategies that currently exist. The bill passed both the House and Senate and was vetoed by the Governor, despite the overwhelming number of ACS CAN emails and other petitions urging her to sign the bill.

Total Cancer-Related Appropriations in NM: \$7,372,300

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