



Testimony of Hilary Schneider, Director of Government Relations, Maine,  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network  
In Support of LD 1476 “An Act To Ensure Continued Coverage for Essential Health Care”  
April 25, 2017

Good afternoon, Senator Whittemore, Representative Lawrence, and members of the Insurance and Financial Services Committee. My name is Hilary Schneider and I am the Director of Government Relations in Maine for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN). ACS CAN is the advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society. We support evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem.

I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit the following testimony in support of LD 1476.

In 2017, it is estimated that 8,750 Mainers will be diagnosed with cancer, and 3,260 are predicted to die from the disease. We know, by applying prevention and early detection strategies, roughly half of cancer deaths could be avoided.<sup>1</sup> Currently, federal law requires that all private health insurance plans cover a range of cancer prevention and early detection services without cost sharing. Coverage of preventive services such as cancer screenings helps to prevent some forms of cancer and can help detect other cancers at an earlier stage when the individual has a higher likelihood of more treatment options and a better overall health outcome. Including preventive services as standard benefits in health insurance has benefits to overall public health, saves lives and can reduce health care spending.

Given the uncertainty at the federal level, passing LD 1476 is imperative to ensure that we are continuing to prevent cancer and detect it early for Mainers covered by individual and small group health plans.

Most important to cancer prevention, is the bill’s requirement for coverage of all services given an A or B rating by the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force, or USPSTF. This includes preventive and early detection screening for colorectal cancer, early detection screening for breast cancer, and preventive and early detection screening for cervical cancer. Access to these tests saves lives.

According to our most recent statistics, those diagnosed with early stage, localized cancer colorectal cancer have a 90 percent chance of surviving 5 years, those diagnosed with early stage cervical cancer have a 90 percent chance of surviving 5 years or more, and those diagnosed with early stage breast cancer have a 99 percent chance of surviving 5 years or more. The likelihood of a 5-year survival drops significantly if the cancer spreads to regional or distant parts of the

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<sup>1</sup> Cancer Facts and Figures 2017, American Cancer Society

body before it is detected. These numbers tell us that utilization of preventive and early detection services allows people diagnosed with cancer to live longer.

Even better than an early stage cancer diagnosis, is the prevention of a cancer diagnosis all together. For example, this bill would require coverage for a screening colonoscopy starting at the age of 50. This test can find and remove pre-cancerous polyps, and prevent that individual from ever having to hear the words “you have cancer”. This year, 220 Mainers are predicted to die from colorectal cancer. If every eligible man and woman received a preventive screening for colorectal cancer, the death rate could be cut by 50 percent. LD 1476 will ensure continued steps towards the goal of all Mainers over the age of 50, being able to access this life saving test. In addition to the prevention of colorectal cancer, this proposal will also ensure continued coverage of tests to prevent cervical cancer. The good news is in 2017, fewer than 50 Mainers are predicted to be diagnosed with cervical cancer. We must ensure continued access to tests that prevent cervical cancer, to maintain this low rate of diagnosis.

We have cancer screening and early detection services that save lives. I strongly urge you to support LD 1476, so we can make sure privately insured Mainers are included in the lives saved this year and beyond.