



The Honorable Wes Keller, Chair
House Health and Social Services Committee
State Capitol, Room 432
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

April 7, 2011

Dear Chair Keller and HSS Committee Members:

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) supports HB209, Insurance Coverage for Tobacco Cessation.

ACS CAN commends the legislature on its investment in tobacco prevention efforts in Alaska over the past decade. Together, we have seen significant reductions in both youth and adult smoking rates, but there is more work to do.

Tobacco use remains Alaska's number one source of preventable illness and death. For employers, it is also the single greatest cause of excess health care spending and productivity losses. Tobacco cessation coverage is among the most cost-effective health insurance benefits available.

We know that quitting a tobacco addiction is difficult, which is why we work so hard to keep kids from ever starting to use tobacco. Across the nation, more than 70% of smokers want to quit and attempt to do so each year, but without help, most fail. Smoking cessation counseling and medicines are proven to help and improve quit rates.

HB209 moves Alaska forward towards the standard of care documented in the national Clinical Practice Guideline for Treating Tobacco Use and Dependence.

Thank you for your support of tobacco prevention in Alaska. HB209 is one more important piece of Alaska's tobacco prevention and cessation efforts. ACS CAN urges your support of this legislation.

Sincerely,

Emily Nenon
Alaska Government Relations Director