



February 10, 2005

Joint Appropriations Health & Human Services Subcommittee
Chairwoman Representative Christine Kaufmann
Montana House of Representatives
Helena, Montana

Dear Representative Kaufmann and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kristin Page Nei. I serve the American Cancer Society as their State Government Relations Director. On behalf of the American Cancer Society, Great West Division I ask you to support the Governor's proposal to fund the Montana Tobacco Use Prevention Program with 32% of the annual payments from the Master Tobacco Settlement Agreement.

Smoking accounts for at least 20% of all cancer deaths. Smoking is responsible for 87% of lung cancers. Smoking is also associated with cancers of the mouth, pharynx, larynx, esophagus, pancreas, uterine cervix, kidney and bladder. If we are truly committed to reducing the cancer death and incidence rates then we need to put a major emphasis on reducing tobacco consumption and preventing our children from starting this deadly habit. (American Cancer Society Facts & Figures, 2005)

Changes in laws and funding of science-based programs can impact millions of people, exponentially expanding and enhancing our organization's mission to eliminate cancer as a major health problem.

Decisions you as legislators make can help or hinder in the fight against cancer and ultimately determine whether lives will be saved.

The single most important contribution that this legislative body can do to reduce the mortality and incidence rates of cancer is to pass a comprehensive series of tobacco disease prevention bills. The corner stone would be to fund a science-based tobacco disease prevention program coupled with protecting Montanans from exposure to secondhand smoke and frequently significantly increasing taxes on tobacco products.

We owe it to our future generations of Montanans to stop the crisis management of our healthcare needs. We must be visionary based on science. The science that proves that if we put money into a proven prevention model that we will in the long term save lives and money. For once, let's be like California. Overall, for every single dollar the state currently spends on the California program it is reducing statewide healthcare cost by more than \$3.60. (CA DHS April 2000)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristin Page Nei".

Kristin Page Nei
Montana Advocacy Manager