

October 4, 2017

Chairman Ballance and Interim Finance Committee Members

My name is Keri Yoder, and I am an advocate with the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network. I am here on behalf of cancer patients, survivors, caregivers and families. Cancer is a feared word in our vocabulary. It is scary to go through a cancer diagnosis and treatment. But this should not be a terrifying experience. The tough times that cancer patients face could become trickier. Some of the proposed cuts that will impact our fight against cancer would be the elimination of Medicare prescription benefits for over 10,000 low-income seniors. Not being able to receive medications is detrimental to surviving cancer. A cut of \$8.5 million in hospice services will be negative to cancer patients and their families who need support, guidance, and comfort during their cancer fight. Cutting \$23 million in reimbursement rates for hospitals providing care to Medicaid patients including cuts to payments for Montana's rural critical access hospitals. These cuts would mean reduced access to services in Montana. This would affect living in rural areas trying to live with cancer.

We are calling on the legislature to work with us to prevent these devastating cuts. We ask them to minimize these cuts and pass a comprehensive tobacco tax increase. It will save lives. 3,900 premature smoking-caused deaths could be prevented. It will save money. \$292.97 million in long term health care costs from adult and youth smoking declines.

Thank you for your time,

Keri Yoder

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Legislative Finance Committee
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Exhibit 22