

American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
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March 25, 2013

To: Chair Monnes-Anderson, Senate Committee on Health Care and Human Services
From: Jason Parks, Government Relations Director, American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
RE: Support of Senate Bill 621

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (“ACS CAN”) is the advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society (the “Society”). The Society is a nationwide, community-based, voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem by preventing cancer, saving lives, and diminishing suffering from cancer, through research, education, advocacy, and service. The American Cancer Society is the largest voluntary health organization in the United States.

ACS CAN appreciates the opportunity to comment to the committee on Senate Bill 621. As an evidence-based organization, we support this legislation and its effort to ensure the Health Evidence Review Commission (HERC) and its relevant subcommittees make informed, expert-led coverage decisions.

As you are aware, HERC has been entrusted to, among other things, “Develop or identify and shall disseminate evidence-based health care guidelines for use by providers, consumers and purchasers of health care in Oregon”. However, this responsibility becomes difficult, if not impossible, when permanent members of the Commission lack the necessary expertise to provide knowledgeable guidance on coverage decisions.

Senate Bill 621 would alleviate this problem by allowing the Director of the Oregon Health Authority to temporarily appoint an expert(s) to advisory or subcommittees in need of their expertise. Importantly, this legislation also grants the appointee full voting rights with respect to recommendations regarding the technology or treatment for which they were appointed. Without this, the expert would not have as significant an impact on the eventual decision made by the committee and their input could easily be ignored.

There are many cancer patients and their families that are affected daily by the decisions made by the Health Evidence Review Commission. ACS CAN is committed to ensuring these decisions are evidence-based and expertly informed. Senate Bill 621 is an opportunity to improve the existing HERC model and safeguard against ill-informed coverage guidances. Please join ACS CAN in support of this important legislation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.