



**Insurance and Real Estate Committee  
February 5, 2009**

**Testimony of the American Cancer Society**

The American Cancer Society is urging your support of **HB 5172, An Act Establishing the Connecticut Health Steps Program.**

The American Cancer Society continues to advocate for meaningful health care coverage for all individuals. Meaningful health care requires that the insurance be, adequate, affordable, available, and administratively simple. The insurance needs to be adequate, it needs to allow for access to a full range of health care coverage that includes prevention and early detection of cancer and other illnesses. It must also be affordable, primarily based on the individual's ability to pay. It must be available to anyone, regardless of health status or prior claims. It must also be administratively simple so that patients can understand and navigate the system effectively. HB 5172 will help in the effort in developing a health care benefits that accomplishes these goals.

The Healthy Steps proposal can help to reduce the number of uninsured, reduce costs, and improve the quality of health care. This proposal will make great step in making insurance more affordable and accessible to individuals and small businesses employers.

There are several cancer related components that frame a quality health plan. The plan should cover and remind individuals of routine cancer screenings, and offer information and resources for healthy lifestyles. A comprehensive plan would also cover second opinions along with responding to abnormal screenings by conducting follow-up procedures, and should also allow for access for diagnostic test and treatments for different cancers that are in accordance with National Comprehensive Cancer Network guidelines.

The American Cancer Society is supportive of this legislations plan of implementing the Health Care Reform Commission in regards to developing an affordable and comprehensive health care plan, however we caution against the removal of any health care mandates that the Commission recommends. Many of these mandates are to assure preventative and early detection of cancer. Making sure that these mandates cover these procedures ensures that individuals obtain and have the appropriate coverage for these potentially life-saving procedures. By eliminating these procedures, health care costs have the potential to rise because they are not detected at its earliest stages.

Please support this important piece of legislation so that every Connecticut resident is entitled to adequate, affordable, available and administratively simple health insurance.