



**American Cancer Society
Cancer Action Network**
825 Brook Street
I-91 Tech Center
Rocky Hill, CT. 06067
(203)-379-4850
www.acscan.org

**Human Services Committee
Human Services/Medicaid - Department of Social Services
February 18, 2016**

Comments from the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network on **S.B. No. 17
AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES.**

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is pleased to provide comments on **S.B. No. 17 AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR HUMAN SERVICES**. ACS CAN is the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society that supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem.

During these challenging economic conditions it is understandable that difficult choices have to be made. These are decisions that need to be made with careful and deliberate consideration, and we recognize the efforts of the legislature in achieving that end. As careful as these decisions need to be, there also needs to be deliberation regarding the long-term effects that specific actions may have. In 2016 it is estimated that approximately 21,700 Connecticut residents will be diagnosed with cancer while 6,780 will die from the disease¹.

- **Section 32 – Repeal of Legislative Review of Medicaid Waivers**

ACS CAN is concerned about Section 32 of SB 17, which would eliminate a statutory procedure for legislative committee review and approval of Medicaid waivers prior to submission to the Federal Center for Medicaid Services. Eliminating this 20-year-old review and oversight process would take away the ability of the Legislature to exercise its role in ensuring the public interest is being served. The review process is intended to provide oversight and to protect Medicaid enrollees and applicants and we urge caution in relaxing such standards.

- **Consolidate Agency Operating Funds – Block Grants**
- **Reduce Agency Operating Funds 5.75%**

Insofar as to how it may affect Human Services programs spread across multiple agencies, the Governor's budget proposal creates block grants for agencies shifting responsibility over spending from the legislature to the Office of Policy Management and

Agency Commissioners. This change would give far more power and influence to fewer people. The lack of line items makes it very difficult to track funding levels as well as expenditures and the proposal does not clarify to what extent non-governmental experts such as doctors and nurses as well as the public itself, would have any opportunity to provide input and influence the funding of a given program.

Additionally, without the safety of legislative oversight, the public may not even be aware of a Human Services program cut until after it has already been made.

At a time when collaboration, innovation and coordination between programs should be encouraged to ensure greater savings and more positive outcomes, this proposal would essentially require internal agency programs as well as external organizations that traditionally or typically receive state budget funds to have to compete with each other for funding.

- **Impact of State Employee Reductions**

ACS CAN urges the Appropriations committee to consider the potential impact on Human Services programs and affected clients when considering the breadth of proposed state employee workforce reductions.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments.

Bryte Johnson
Director of Government Relations
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

#####

ⁱ American Cancer Society Cancer Facts and Figures - 2016
<http://www.cancer.org/acs/groups/content/@research/documents/document/acspc-047079.pdf>