

To: State of Connecticut, Appropriations Committee

From: Susan C. Myers, West Hartford

I will not be able to provide testimony in person on 2/18/16, but I want to add my voice via letter. I DO care about cancer and I DO vote, so sharing my story, to provide the perspective of one of the electorate is a story that you need to hear. My story, not very unique. The age of the person with cancer may be a variable - but the impact on family, on financesis not at all unique.

I lost my eldest son to cancer at age 17 -- devastating is an understatement. During his battle with cancer from age 14 to age 17, our family was focused on a cure. Time spent in many hospitalizations/exams/unplanned medical treatments resulted in total change of life style.

There was a SIGNIFICANT impact on our personal spending -- as health insurance did not covering all aspects of treatment. Our discretionary income was quickly consumed by hospital parking fees and medical deductibles. Did we care about the impact to the CT economy or to the businesses we weren't supporting? No, not a concern, but this loss of income to Sales Tax, etc. SHOULD be of financial concern to the health of the State of CT.

My surviving son, started smoking in High School. The addiction to tobacco is stunning and awful! The American Cancer Society's Chief Medical Officer, has stated that lung cancer is the number one curable cancer.....and yet...the challenge to cure, when addiction is the enemy.....is very hard to accomplish. When the financial impact of tobacco to CT is \$2.03 billion in annual health costs -- we/YOU really need to stand up to assuring that smoking cessation programs are funded and are effectively operationalized!!! The funding from the Tobacco Settlement needs to be spent on countering tobacco in all forums!

Preventing cancer -- we aren't there YET! Researchers and those involved in genetic mapping, have made great strides and we are close....but....until then we need to be resolute in battling this multi-faceted disease. In my workplace, in my team of 90, there are 4 people who have been diagnosed within the past 2 years (2 breast cancer, 1 cervical, one non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma). Each benefited from early diagnosis.

Early detection has resulted in a better prognosis and because of early detection less prolonged treatment (ergo cost avoidance) and better quality of life for the cancer patient and their family....getting back to work and a "normal" life.

A delayed diagnosis.....at Stage 2, 3, and horribly at Stage 4 - because of lack of access to care and/or lack of health care only increases the cost of treatment, has an incremental negative impact on quality of life and impacts the economy of CT -- as those who are in a life-threatening health care situation are not out spending dollars with CT based businesses.

We need to do all we can to prevent cancer, we can prevent 1/3 of cancers by combating smoking; the state must be do more by funding tobacco control and by assuring funding for the breast and cervical cancer early detection programs.