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Insurance and Real Estate Committee
March 1, 2016
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network Testimony

RE: H.B. No. 5230 - AN ACT REQUIRING HEALTH INSURANCE COVERAGE FOR FERTILITY PRESERVATION FOR INSURED DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER.

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) is pleased to provide comments on HB 5230, An Act Requiring Health Insurance Coverage For Fertility Preservation For Insureds Diagnosed With Cancer. 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.

Fertility in both men and women can be greatly compromised due to treatments for cancer. Treatments that involve the surgical removal of the ovaries or the uterus can impact female fertility as well as hormone levels, proper function of the fallopian tubes, cervix and the development of eggs. Sperm quality, motility and quantity in males are all influenced by chemotherapy, radiation or by the surgical removal of the testicles. The greatest impact to fertility is through the use of alkylating chemotherapy medications or direct exposure of the testicles or ovaries to radiation therapy. The range of effects can vary depending on the intensity of the dosage, size and location of the field of radiation.

Methods used to preserve fertility for women include in vitro fertilization (IVF)—the most common and successful method of preserving a woman's fertility. But some women who have fast-growing cancers cannot wait 2 to 3 weeks to begin treatment. And women with breast cancer may risk some growth of their tumors during IVF cycles because of the high levels of estrogen caused by the hormone shots.

Sperm banking is a fairly easy and successful way for men who have gone through puberty to store sperm for future use. Many men can store sperm even if they have reduced sperm quality or quantity. This option can also work for boys as young as 12 or 13, as long as they have gone through puberty.

Sperm banking is an option for men who want to have children after completing cancer treatment. It's also a good option for a man who thinks he might want children in the future, but isn't sure. By storing his sperm, he can decide later. If the sample is not used, it can be discarded or donated for research.

After reviewing treatments to preserve fertility, most people will ask themselves if they can even afford any of these options. *Many of the tests that diagnose fertility are covered by insurance, but treatment costs are often not covered.*

HB 5230 would require health insurance coverage of fertility preservation for those undergoing cancer treatments that may adversely affect a person's ability to have children. It not only provides options to be able to have children even after treatment has resulted in temporary or permanent infertility, but also comfort that such a basic human need can be fulfilled.

Cancer is a scary experience full of anxiety and fear. While we are always mindful that any new mandate would have a fiscal impact on the state, this bill provides options and peace of mind to allow all those touched by cancer to focus their efforts where they belong—on getting better.

We respectfully urge a Joint Favorable report.

Bryte Johnson
Government Relations Director
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

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