

Public Health Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: SB-1191

AN ACT ESTABLISHING A PANCREATIC CANCER SCREENING AND
Title: TREATMENT REFERRAL PROGRAM.

Vote Date: 2/10/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 2/3/2025

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

The Public Health Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

Beginning January 1, 2026, the bill is intended to promote screening, detection, and treatment for pancreatic cancer, increase access to education on the benefits of early detection, and provide counseling and referral services for treatment, focusing on unserved or underserved populations.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Manisha Juthani, MD, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH)

While DPH is supportive of efforts to improve pancreatic cancer outcomes, the bill would require DPH to add significant resources. In 2021, Connecticut had the highest rate of pancreatic cancer in the United States, at 15.6 per 100,000 compared to the US rate of 13.4 per 100,000. Yet, to date, there is no screening test that has been shown to lower the morbidity rate from pancreatic cancer. No major professional groups recommend routine screening of people who are at average risk for pancreatic cancer. To improve outcomes, it is important to raise awareness of risk factors for pancreatic cancer.

Vincent Candelora, State Representative and Minority Leader, Connecticut General Assembly (CGA)

There is a positive correlation between early detection and the success of treatment and even recovery from this especially difficult type of cancer. Early detection programs will enhance medical professionals' ability to treat this insidious disease and improve outcomes.

Christine Cohen, State Senator, 12th District, CGA:

Pancreatic cancer is an insidious disease with a lack of early symptoms and a particular aggressiveness resulting in poor outcomes. Research shows that, when detected early, patient outcomes improve significantly. This bill promotes awareness, early access to screening for high-risk populations, and supports advancements in early detection through an understanding of risk factors and symptoms. Sen Cohen believes this bill can help change the trajectory of this disease.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Tara Petta, Prospect, CT:

This bill contains life-saving proposals that are meaningful and powerful, and a step in the right direction. Personal experience with a pancreatic cancer diagnosis has educated me on the benefits of early detection. Screening programs are crucial for early detection and providing patients with hope for a successful outcome.

Bret Schipper, MD, Chief of Surgical Oncology, Hartford Hospital:

Pancreatic cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in CT and has a poor 5-year survival rate. Hartford Hospital has partnered with Project Purple to establish the state's most extensive high-risk pancreatic cancer screening program. This program identifies high-risk individuals and screens them to detect the cancer at an early stage, improving the potential for a successful outcome. Legislation like this will help support this work to improve outcomes and save lives.

Dino Verrelli, Founder and CEO, Project Purple:

After losing his dad to pancreatic cancer in 2011 and recognizing that early detection may have improved his dad's chances for a positive outcome, Mr. Verrelli founded Project Purple dedicated to advancing early screening and detection for Pancreatic cancer. This disease is the least funded of all cancers in the United States and, predictably, has a very low 5-year survival rate. There have been significant recent advances in the use of genetic therapies, improving hope for the future. But, to improve the rates of successful outcomes, we need enhanced screening programs. This bill is a step in the right direction.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Faith Neibert:

While Ms. Neibert did not oppose the bill in her written testimony, she did list herself as opposed and wrote of the need to address the prevalence of cholera in Connecticut.

Reported by: David Rackliffe, Asst. Clerk

Date: February 11, 2025