

THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS  
CANCER CENTER

TO: Chairwoman Schmidt

Members of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

FROM: Roy A. Jensen, MD – Director, The University of Kansas Cancer Center

RE: In support of Senate Bill 316

DATE: February 8, 2018

Chairwoman Schmidt and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony to the committee regarding the need for comprehensive tobacco cessation benefits in Kansas. I am Dr. Roy Jensen, Director of The University of Kansas Cancer Center. Today I have the opportunity to draw attention to a significant public health issue in Kansas: one that needs immediate attention and cannot be delayed. Currently, cancer is the leading cause of death in our state and kills over 5,400 Kansans each year. The biggest culprit is lung cancer. Each year, 2,000 Kansans are diagnosed with lung cancer, one of the most preventable types of cancer, and most of these people die for one reason alone: they smoked cigarettes.

As a National Cancer Institute (NCI) designated cancer center, KU Cancer Center must demonstrate that we are significantly improving the health of Kansans and reducing the cancer burden in our region. One way we can dramatically cut Kansans chances of developing cancer is by helping them to stop smoking. It is also one of our biggest challenges.

### **Kansas Tobacco Facts**

- Tobacco is the number one cause of preventable death in Kansas
- 10.2 percent of high school students
- 18.7 percent of high school students have used at least one form of tobacco. This includes cigarettes, spit or smokeless tobacco, cigars, pipes and other forms of smoked tobacco.



- 17.7 percent of Kansas adults smoke, compared to the national average of 15.1 percent
- Every year, 4,400 Kansans die from the effects of smoking and 1,600 youth become new smokers
- \$779 is paid per household, annually, in smoking related costs
- Smoking costs Kansas \$1.12 billion in health care costs each year

### **Why does tobacco matter to KU Cancer Center?**

Tobacco prevention and smoking cessation efforts are a significant component of the Cancer Center's pursuit of NCI Comprehensive Cancer designation. Research shows that 31 percent of all cancers could be eradicated if people no longer smoked. As part of our prevention efforts for comprehensive designation, we are committed to educating the public on the dangers of tobacco use. It is our goal to see a 20 percent decrease in tobacco use over the next 15 years.

By helping more Kansans successfully quit tobacco use, this bill offers an important opportunity to improve the long-term health of Kansans, and I urge you to support SB 316. Thank you.



Roy A. Jensen, MD  
Director