



March 1, 2017

RE: Support for Lung Cancer Prevention and Treatment Services for All Kentuckians

Dear Kentucky Policymaker,

We are a group of concerned health professionals, non-profit organizational leaders, business leaders, and community-based organizations that work on the front lines of lung cancer care in Kentucky. Every day, lives are lost to a disease that can be prevented or more effectively treated if detected at an early stage. As the leading cause of cancer deaths in the state, lung cancer is an urgent public health issue for Kentucky. Kentucky has the highest incidence of lung cancer in the country. Almost 75% of these cases are diagnosed at a late stage, making effective treatment extremely challenging. As a result, Kentucky also leads the nation in lung cancer deaths, with a mortality rate that is roughly 50% higher than the national rate.

We believe in a Kentucky without lung cancer. We are therefore committed to supporting access to high-quality, comprehensive lung cancer care for all Kentuckians. Comprehensive care is care that includes the full spectrum of healthcare services necessary to prevent and treat lung cancer—from tobacco cessation services to high-quality lung cancer screenings and specialty care. We are also committed to supporting the protection of all Kentuckians from environmental factors, such as secondhand smoke and radon, that place them at increased risk for developing lung cancer.

We therefore urge you to consider the needs of all Kentuckians living with or at risk for lung cancer in your work. These needs include:

- **Access to High-Quality, Affordable Health Insurance Coverage for All Kentuckians:** Without health insurance coverage, lung cancer prevention and treatment services are unaffordable for many of our residents. This is especially true for low-income individuals—a group that is disproportionately at risk for developing lung cancer. Providing access to high-quality affordable insurance coverage (e.g., via Medicaid or subsidized coverage) helps to ensure that all Kentuckians can access the care they need to prevent or treat lung cancer.
- **Access to Life-Saving Preventive Services:** Preventive services, such as tobacco cessation counseling and medication and high-quality lung cancer screenings, play an important role in reducing lung cancer incidence and mortality. Promoting the use of preventive services—such as by guaranteeing insurance coverage of such services at little or no cost to the consumer—is therefore critical to reducing the impact of lung cancer in Kentucky.
- **Protection from Environmental Risks:** Environmental factors such as exposure to secondhand smoke and radon place individuals at heightened risk of developing lung cancer. By taking steps to protect Kentuckians from exposure to such risks, we can therefore drive down the rates of lung cancer in the state.

We thank you for taking the time to consider the impact of lung cancer in Kentucky, and for considering these issues as you work to promote the health and well-being of all Kentuckians.

Sincerely,