



To: Representative Steven Johnson, Chair
House Insurance and Pensions Committee

From: Fred Logan, Jr. – Chair, Masonic Cancer Alliance Partners Advisory Board

RE: HB 2129

Date: February 10, 2021

I am grateful to have this opportunity to submit testimony, as chair of the Masonic Cancer Alliance Partners Advisory Board and current Kansas resident, in support of House Bill 2129, legislation that would provide tobacco cessation benefits in the Kansas state employees health care benefits program.

The Masonic Cancer Alliance Partners Advisory Board is a collaborative effort of hospitals and research institutions in Kansas and western Missouri. The Partner's Advisory Board provides support to The University of Kansas Cancer Center's National Cancer Institute designation by demonstrating research and education collaboration among key hospitals and research institutions for the benefit of the region.

House Bill 2129 would require the Kansas state employees health care commission to implement coverage for tobacco cessation benefits within the limit of appropriations made for that purpose. The tobacco cessation benefits would, among other things, include coverage for at least four 90-day medication-supported tobacco cessation attempts per year and individual or group counseling for authorized tobacco cessation counseling.

The importance of tobacco cessation counseling cannot be overstated. Approximately 17.3% of Kansans smoke. This increases their risk for heart disease and lung cancer. Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in Kansas. And studies have shown that evidence-based treatment, including medications and counseling – the kind of tobacco cessation counseling that would be supported by passage of this legislation - doubles smokers' ability to quit.

It is also important to note that the passage of House Bill 2129 would facilitate tobacco cessation counseling early in the cancer treatment process. Quitting smoking early during cancer treatment reduces recurrence, improves quality and length of life, and reduces medical costs.

Masonic Cancer Alliance members are regularly seeking resources to deliver evidence-based tobacco treatment to their patients who smoke. This legislation would provide important support for their efforts and the efforts of other medical providers throughout the state.

In summary, I submit that this legislation would provide important tobacco cessation benefits for state employees and would advance the cause of preventing cancers.

As chair of The Masonic Cancer Alliance Partners Advisory Board, I support House Bill 2129, legislation that would provide for tobacco cessation benefits in the Kansas state employees health care benefits program.