



American Society of Clinical Oncology



April 18, 2017

Representative George Till
State Capitol
115 State Street, Drawer 33
Montpelier, VT 05633

Dear Representative Till,

The American Society of Clinical Oncology (ASCO) and the Northern New England Clinical Oncology Society (NNECOS) strongly support your legislation, H 52, which would increase the legal age for the purchase of tobacco products to 21 in Vermont.

As the professional society representing more than 40,000 members who treat patients with cancer, ASCO's mission is to ensure access to high quality cancer care. ASCO is committed to policies that will contribute to the reduced prevalence of tobacco use and hence prevent the occurrence of cancer and other smoking-caused diseases. NNECOS is a professional society whose mission is "to assure the availability of and access to high quality oncology care in our region." NNECOS represents more than 500 oncology professional members in Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine.

Tobacco use is the leading preventable cause of cancer in the world. Cigarette smoking alone causes 11 different types of cancer (acute myeloid leukemia and cancers of the lung, oral cavity, esophagus, stomach, liver, pancreas, kidney, bladder, colorectum, and uterine cervix) and causes 30% of all cancer deaths in the United States (2014 Surgeon General's Report). A recent report from the World Health Organization estimated that the deadly impacts of tobacco cost world economies more than \$1 trillion annually in healthcare expenditures and lost productivity (The Economics of Tobacco & Tobacco Control, WHO, 2017).

An Institute of Medicine (IOM) report considered the public health implications of raising the minimum age of legal access (MLA) to tobacco products, which is set at 18 by the federal government, to 21 years of age. Based on scenarios the IOM committee reasoned to be likely, the committee concluded that raising the MLA would result in reductions in tobacco use initiation, and delays in tobacco use initiation, that were substantial enough to prevent hundreds of thousands of premature tobacco-caused deaths in the first US birth cohort to benefit from a raise of the MLA to 21 (IOM Report, 2015).

ASCO and NNECOS thank you for introducing this important legislation and stand ready to help you enact it. If you have questions or would like assistance on any issue related to providing

care of individuals with cancer, please do not hesitate to contact Katherine Flannigan with ASCO at Katherine.Flannigan@asco.org or Lori Aubrey with NNECOS at laubrey@nnecos.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dan Hayes MD". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Daniel F. Hayes, MD, FACP, FASCO
President
American Society of Clinical Oncology

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "S. Ades". The signature is written in a cursive, slanted style with a large initial 'S'.

Steven Ades, MD, MSCE, FRCPC
Immediate Past President
Northern New England Clinical Oncology
Society