

Pennsylvania Cancer Coalition

Policy Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes

May 5, 2022

Attendees: (Microsoft Teams meeting)

Emma Watson (ACS), co-chair

Ruth Modzelewski (University of Pittsburgh/UPMC Cancer Institute), co-chair

April Barry (PA Department of Health, Division of Cancer Prevention & Control)

Nate Burden (Radon expert)

Lyn Robertson (UPMC Hillman Cancer Center)

Mary Doherty (Leukemia & Lymphoma Society; Advocate)

Angelica Katz (Susan G. Komen, State Policy & Advocacy)

Gary Rathsmill (Leukemia & Lymphoma Society; volunteer)

Andrea (Grada) Palashoff (Adagio Health)

Lyn Robertson (UPMC Hillman Cancer Center)

The meeting was called to order at 9:33am.

1. Emma provided a review of current Federal activities:

- a. FDA Releases Proposed Rules to Prohibit Menthol Flavoring in Cigarettes and All Flavors in Cigars

The FDA released its proposed rules on April 28th to eliminate menthol cigarettes and eliminate all flavors in all cigars. Ending menthol flavoring in cigarettes is a long overdue step forward in reducing youth tobacco initiation and Big Tobacco's targeting of Black communities, who consistently report the highest prevalence of menthol cigarette use. Once finalized, this rule will also help combat the health disparities driven by Big Tobacco's premeditated predatory practices to addict Black, LGBTQ and low-income communities for decades.

- b. More Families Could Afford Health Care Thanks to Proposed 'Family Glitch' Fix

On April 5th the administration released a proposed rule that would fix the so-called 'family glitch' in the Affordable Care Act. If finalized, the change would allow the total premium cost of all family members covered under an employer sponsored plan to be considered when determining if the coverage is affordable rather than restricting the calculation to the cost for the employee only. If finalized, this change would make coverage on the marketplace more affordable for over 1 million people.

- c. House Introduces Health Equity Bill Critical to Reducing Health Disparities and Fighting Chronic Disease

On April 26th legislation was introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives to improve access to quality health care and decrease health disparities in communities of color. The Health Equity and Accountability Act (HEAA) of 2022 provides a

comprehensive set of strategic policy solutions designed to eliminate racial and ethnic health disparities, including those that strengthen health data collection to inform policies, improve diversity in the health care workforce, and expand and improve access to health care services.

The legislation also offers a path to increase the federal tobacco tax, including tax parity on other tobacco products like e-cigarettes, and improve access to cessation services and other lifesaving care in Medicaid and private health plans to reduce suffering and death from tobacco-related diseases like cancer. The bill also permanently lifts the cap on federal Medicaid spending in the U.S. Territories and brings federal matching rates in line with states – correcting a longstanding and unjust imbalance that left many limited-income individuals in the territories without access to lifesaving medical care.

The bill also includes provisions from the Diversifying Investigations Via Equitable Research Studies for Everyone (DIVERSE) Trials Act, which is bipartisan, bicameral legislation that aims to increase access to clinical trials and improve participation by communities that are traditionally underrepresented in them by removing barriers to costs from non-medical fees for patients.

HEAA and the DIVERSE Trials Act are strongly supported by the Congressional Tri-Caucuses which includes the Congressional Black Caucus, the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, and the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus.

2. Emma provided a review of current State activities specifically with a call-out for advocates for Prior Authorization and Step Therapy Reform:

ACS is holding a press event on May 24th at 11 in the main rotunda on prior auth and step therapy. We are looking for advocates who are willing to stand behind the speakers in support of the issue. If you are local and available that day we would love to have you!

Advocates for Prior Authorization and Step Therapy Reform

Press conference with members of the Pennsylvanians for Reforming Prior Authorization and Step Therapy Coalition and legislators

Start: May 24th, 11:00 AM
End: May 24th, 12:00 PM
Facility: Main Rotunda
Event Type: Press Conference

3. Emerging ideas/priorities/updates/discussion:
 - a) Mary mentioned that LLS Advocates will be talking next week regarding the bill that they have been working on which relates to SB 225

The meeting adjourned at 9:48 am.