



To: The Honorable Senator Martin  
Members of the Senate Finance Committee

From: Emma Watson  
Pennsylvania Government Relations Director  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

Subject: State appropriations on pediatric cancer research

Cancer is the leading cause of death by disease in the United States for children ages 1-19, with more than 15,000 children facing a diagnosis this year. Research has improved treatments and boosted survival in some types of pediatric cancer, but treatment toxicities still cause most children to experience distressing side effects and late effects—conditions that often cause significant suffering that continues into adulthood and can last a lifetime. Additional scientific research is essential to drive advances in childhood cancers that remain deadly, and to improve quality of life and minimized symptoms for the more than 420,000 childhood and adolescent cancer survivors living in the U.S. today.

Because of major treatment advances in recent decades, more than 80% of children with cancer now survive 5 years or more. Overall, this is an increase since the mid-1970s, when the 5-year survival rate was about 58%. Still, survival rates vary depending on the type of cancer and other factors. <sup>1</sup>

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention has found that pediatric cancer rates are the highest in the Northeast. CDC data shows that there were 7,167 cases of pediatric cancer in Pennsylvania recorded between 2003 and 2014. That's a rate of more than 186 per one million, which was among the higher rates in the country. Only Maine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Washington, D.C., and New York had higher rates. <sup>2</sup>

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network takes a comprehensive approach to combatting childhood cancer by advocating for government policies and federal and state appropriations targeted at making it easier for all children to get quality care and providing support for patients and their families. State appropriations dedicated to pediatric cancer can advance research and save lives.

Please contact me at [emma.watson@cancer.org](mailto:emma.watson@cancer.org) or 717.707.0385 if you have any questions.

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<sup>1</sup> American Cancer Society. *Facts & Figures 2018*. American Cancer Society. Atlanta, Ga. 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Siegel DA, Li J, Henley SJ, Wilson RJ, Lunsford Buchanan N, Tai E, Van Dyne EA. [Geographic variation in pediatric cancer incidence—United States, 2003–2014](#). *MMWR* 2018;67(25):707–713.