



February 9, 2015

Dear Health and Human Services Reform Committee,

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) supports the CARE Act (Senate File 107, Senator Eken and House File 210, Representative Zerwas) which recognizes the critical role family caregivers play in supporting their family members after a hospital discharge and keeping their loved ones out of costly institutions. Thousands of Minnesotans are caring for an aging parent or loved one, helping them to live independently in their own homes. Family caregivers perform a variety of caregiving duties, and now that people are living longer, the role of family caregivers has dramatically expanded to include performing more complex medical and nursing tasks with little to no training.

The CARE Act features three important provisions that support family caregivers keep their loved ones safe at home:

1. The name of the family caregiver is recorded when a loved one is admitted into a hospital;
2. The family caregiver is notified if the loved one is to be discharged to another facility or back home; and,
3. The facility must provide an explanation and live instruction of the medical tasks that the family caregiver will perform at home.

Cancer patients often rely on caregivers to help them coordinate their care, manage their medications, provide transportation to outpatient treatment and help with activities of daily living. In particular, for older patients undergoing chemotherapy at home, patients and their designated caregivers need to understand the prescribed chemotherapy medications and any medications given to alleviate pain or nausea, as well as the signs and symptoms associated with adverse reactions. The CARE Act's focus on involving patients and their designated caregivers in discharge planning, and providing training for necessary after-care tasks such as managing medication, will help ensure that caregivers can help patients receive the care they need at home.

Therefore, ACS CAN supports Senate File 107 and House File 210.

Sincerely,

Matt Schafer  
Minnesota Government Relations Director  
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network