



## **Advocacy/Policy Focused Strategies in the Virginia Cancer Plan**

---

*Note: This list is a reference of all the strategies related to advocacy and policy in the VCP to be used to identify priorities for the advocacy/policy committee.*

*Updated: November 30, 2023*

### **PREVENTION**

Goal 1: Reduce exposure to and use of tobacco products among Virginians.

#### Strategies

- a. Advocate for changing state laws to discourage consumption by increasing prices/taxes and requiring tobacco product retailers to be licensed.
- b. Advocate for changing state laws to eliminate exemptions for indoor tobacco use.
- c. Increase funding for tobacco product cessation programs.
- d. Advocate for adopting tobacco-free college, university, and healthcare campus policies.
- e. Advocate for tobacco-free outdoor public spaces such as parks, beaches, playgrounds, etc.
- f. Advocate for a policy to prohibit the sale of flavored liquid nicotine.
- g. Encourage MCOs to cover additional services, above those stipulated in their contracts to include tobacco cessation incentives to members, to reduce costs, and improve the quality of care through value-added services.
- h. Advocate for improved Quit Now utilization by promoting the Quit Now Virginia referral process via collaborative networks and partner communications.

Goal 3: Decrease underage and excessive alcohol consumption among Virginians.

#### Strategies

- a. Advocate for increasing alcohol taxes.

Goal 4: Decrease underage and excessive alcohol consumption among Virginians.

- a. Advocate for increasing alcohol taxes.
- b. Limit alcohol advertisements in public locations near schools and parks where youth ages 21 and younger may be exposed.
- c. Enhance the enforcement of laws prohibiting alcohol sales to minors.

Goal 5: Increase prevention and treatment of carcinogenic infectious diseases among Virginians.

#### Strategies

- a. Advocate for school-based health services to include HPV vaccination.
- b. Advocate for the inclusion of questions on the VYS regarding the use of sun-safe behaviors.

- c. Adopt a policy to require mandatory reporting of radon tests performed and mitigation systems installed by radon professionals.
- d. Advocate for increasing state funding to provide more educational activities and radon test kits.

Goal 6: Reduce overexposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the sun and indoor tanning devices (to include, but not limited to tanning beds, booths, and sun lamps) among Virginians.

- a. Promote policies and education addressing skin cancer, sunscreen use, sun-protective clothing, and hazards of tanning bed use among youth-serving organizations, including but not limited to child development centers, schools, Parks and Recreation, youth worksites, 4H clubs and summer camps.
- b. Advocate for the inclusion of questions on the VYS regarding the use of sun-safe behaviors.
- c. Partner with employers to implement sun safety policies.

Goal 7: Reduce exposure to radon and other environmental substances linked to cancer.

- a. Adopt a policy to require mandatory reporting of radon tests performed and mitigation systems installed by radon professionals.
- b. Encourage more contractors to become trained and certified radon mitigators as required by Virginia Code 32.1-229.01 particularly in the sections of Virginia with the greatest need.
- c. Advocate for increasing state funding to provide more educational activities and radon test kits.
- d. Increase the number of eligible jurisdictions requiring new radon resistant construction techniques.
- e. Partner with federal, state, and local governments, businesses, and communities to reduce exposures to known or suspected environmental risk factors for cancer.
- f. Promote and implement workplace policies and support initiatives that reduce environmental exposure to substances linked to cancer.

## **EARLY DETECTION**

Goal 8: Increase high-quality cancer screening and early detection rates for Virginians.

Overall Strategies

- a. Advocate to ensure coverage of screenings across all public and private payer options.
- b. Advocate for state and local policies that improve access to health insurance and/or free or low-cost screenings.
- c. Advocate for the implementation of workplace policies to provide (paid) time off for individuals to complete recommended cancer screenings and follow up studies.
- d. Advocate to reduce barriers to screening among underserved populations using patient navigation, including community health workers, and other culturally competent outreach strategies.
- e. Advocate to support policies that increase health equity and reduce systemic race-related barriers to screening.
- f. Promote policies that improve access to dental care in Virginia.

## **DIAGNOSIS & CANCER DIRECTED THERAPY**

Goal 9: Provide availability and access to current evidence-based diagnosis and treatment options following national standards.

## Strategies

- a. Advocate for the inclusion and coverage of fertility preservation services.
- b. Advocate for and support legislation favorable to cancer patients, including no limitations on lifetime and annual coverage and pre-existing conditions.
- c. Advocate that state insurance plans provide comprehensive cancer care for diagnosis and therapy and provide adequate coverage for diagnosis and treatment.

Goal 11: Increase the number and diversity of cancer patients enrolled in clinical trials.

## Strategies

- a. Advocate for third party payers to facilitate payment for participation in clinical trials to help increase participation (include transportation to research site, etc).

Goal 12: Establish a system for regular collection of data regarding cancer care across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

- a. Educate the General Assembly on the value of the survey and importance of funding for accurate data collection and analysis.

## **SURVIVORSHIP & PALLIATIVE CARE**

Goal 13: Optimize the quality of life for patients and caregivers across the cancer continuum.

## Strategies

- a. Promote funding for survivorship programs across the state of Virginia, so that all people have access to this type of program regardless of geographic location, race/ethnic, gender and socioeconomic status.
- b. Advocate for coverage of nutrition, physical activity, and mental health services by private and public insurance plans.
- c. Advocate for government resources to reduce the financial burden for all of those impacted by cancer.
- d. Investigate funding for palliative care and hospice programs across the state of Virginia, so that all people have access to this type of program regardless of geographic location, race/ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status.
- e. Advocate for more accessible data sets addressing hospice care.
- f. Promote funding for palliative care programs across the state of Virginia, so that all people have access to this type of program regardless of geographic location, race/ethnicity, gender and socioeconomic status.

## **PEDIATRIC & AYA CANCERS**

Goal 14: Improve access to quality treatment and timely medical information for patients and their families.

## Strategies

- a. Secure funding to support cross collaboration at major university/medical centers in the Commonwealth and create connections for collaborations between all the pediatric cancer treatment centers.
- b. Organize Pediatric Cancer Day in the Commonwealth to engage the state legislature.

- c. Incorporate a focus on cancers affecting pediatric and AYA patients into the General Assembly Cancer Caucus.
- d. Advocate for fertility preservation at time of initial diagnosis as well as throughout treatment.

Goal 15: Improve long-term follow-up care for childhood cancer survivors.

Strategies

- a. Advocate for fertility preservation options and reproductive endocrinology services to be offered through treatment and in the survivorship years.

Goal 18: Address financial burdens of pediatric patients, survivors, and their families.

Strategies

- a. Advocate at the state level for legislation and policies to reduce the financial burden.

**OTHER**

- Advocate for state funding to support the implementation of the Virginia Cancer Plan through the coalition.