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Testimony In Support of SB 233

I consider it a privilege as a citizen to be able to take out the time from my practice and come from Manhattan to submit testimony to this committee with the hope that this effort will be of substantial value to the lives of the patients I work with directly and indirectly. I have been in practice in primary care in Manhattan for 40 years. I saw soldiers for two of those years and felt I had saved some lives and thousands of dollars for our health care insurance systems each time when I was able to get a young soldier to quit smoking. In private practice one of the most cost effective and scientifically validated things I can do is to make a difference with patients where they will quit the use of tobacco. One of the more gratifying daily experiences I have as a physician is when a patient I have not seen for a while come in and tell me that after my visit with them that they actually took the steps and quit tobacco for a number of months or years. Just as commonly in my experience is this kind of report or the report of a patient that I may not have had contact with and told me that where they lived and what they had to pay for use of tobacco was the thing that caused them to abandon their severe tobacco addiction since they could not afford it. It is very common for me to talk with a patient who quit a few years ago to say, I don't know how so and so can afford to smoke.

When I was a young man and half my friends smoked, I remember reflecting on the odds that "I'd walk a mile for a camel." I even at that time was taught by my parents not to use tobacco but I would think that it was really not true that a person would be willing to walk a mile for every cigarette. Maybe they would walk a mile for a pack which had a few hundred cigarettes in it. Science has proven the deleterious effects of tobacco and the first studies that came from the Surgeon General in the 60's when I was in medical school were convincing enough that when our class heard a three hour talk on this subject from the Surgeon General, ½ of the class that was smoking quit for the rest of medical school.

Higher costs for tobacco products clearly effectively discourages the continued use of tobacco. This bill which would effectively increase the cost of tobacco for the consumer

individual will have the same impact that it has had in other places and organizations to reduce the use of tobacco and therefore the thousands of dollars of cost associated with the care of the unfortunately addicted tobacco user and their medical care let alone the pain and suffering and loss of personal independence which comes from some of the diseases tobacco causes. I want to hear more patients tell me that they have quit tobacco and parents of children report that they have quit tobacco. Support for a bill as being put forth will enhance substantially the possibilities of this happening. I understand that the financial aspects of having those that might persist in using tobacco to contribute more to their society in numbers of dollars which is a need for our state at this time. And this does effectively increase revenue for the state. In a society where we commonly promote the ideas of individuals being responsible for their own lives, there is more commitment in this idea that those who are addicted sufficiently that they continue to smoke regardless of the increased cost, they will be at least contributing to the society a small amount of what it will cost his fellow citizens to care for the illnesses which accompany this terrible addiction.

I have come here today as a long time Trustee of the Manhattan Township, an Internal Medicine Physician with emphasis on caring for those that have pulmonary disease. One person who has experienced cardiac disease, past member and leader in the State of the Heart Association, Lung Association, Tobacco Free Kansas Coalition, my religion and member of the chamber of commerce, the barbershop society, raised as a youth in Berkeley, California and lived in Kansas for over half my life of 71 years. My perspective on eliminating tobacco from the lives of people comes from all of these associations and the many patients I see and friends I see suffer from the result of using tobacco for too many years. This bill would have the effect of reducing the burden of state government and organized insurance programs and the medical provider complex made by the use of tobacco by reducing the use as well as helping to pay the resultant cost if no change comes in the use of tobacco by our citizens.

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Township Trustee Manhattan Township

Member of the American College of Physicians

Member of the AMA

Member of the Chamber of Commerce of Manhattan

Citizen of Kansas of 40 years