

## American Cancer Society Announces 2012 Legislative Agenda

Written by Robert Haus

Wednesday, 11 January 2012 13:05

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“We plan to redouble our efforts in 2012 to help make Iowa in fact one of the healthiest states in the Nation.”

Peggy Huppert, Iowa Director, American Cancer Society

DES MOINES, IA – The American Cancer Society (ACS) announced its legislative agenda for 2012 at its annual Legislative Breakfast today at the Capitol.

Joining Huppert at the ACS Breakfast was Gail Orcutt, a Des Moines resident who spoke about the deadly toxin in our homes, radon gas.

“While many Iowans know that smoking is the leading cause of lung cancer and the most preventable cause of death in the state, most don’t know that the second leading cause of lung cancer is radon. It’s an odorless, colorless, tasteless toxin that threatens them where they feel the safest...their homes,” Huppert stated.

ACS distributed free radon testing kits to those in attendance. “Testing is simple, and with these kits, free. But until you test, you won’t know if this killer is lurking in your home,” Huppert noted. “Iowans have been living with this threat for years without knowing about it, and with new test kits, Iowans can take steps to rid their homes of this silent killer.”

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Radon gas seeps into a house from the soil around and under the home; through cracks in the foundation, floor or walls; through hollow-block walls; and through openings around floor drains, pipes and sump pumps.

Governor Branstad proclaimed January as “Radon Awareness Month” with a proclamation dated January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2012. As many as seven out of 10 homes tested in Iowa have radon levels that exceed federal guidelines for exposure.

Huppert praised Governor Branstad for his proclamation. “Governor Branstad has made it a goal of his Administration to make Iowa one of the Nation’s healthiest states, and bringing attention to this silent killer is an excellent step in that direction,” she noted.

Huppert outlined there are other steps ACS will take to help the Administration achieve its goal of making Iowa one of the healthiest states in the Nation:

- Establishing a consumer-friendly Iowa Insurance Exchange;
- Closing the casino exemption in the 2008 Iowa Smokefree Air Act; and
- Securing adequate funding for tobacco prevention and cessation programs.

“Iowa should move forward on establishing its Iowa Insurance Exchange in the 2012 session, so the federal government doesn’t do it for us,” Huppert noted. “We have great leaders in the health care and insurance industries in Iowa, and we need to direct our own future and design our own plan tailored to the specific needs of our citizens.”

“We also plan to continue our efforts to eliminate the casino exemption from Iowa’s Smokefree Air Act. Iowa’s casino employees should no longer have to choose between their job and their health,” Huppert stated.

“And finally,” she noted, “last year the Legislature dealt our efforts to reduce teen and adult smoking a severe setback with budget cuts of over 65%. The tobacco companies haven’t reduced their sales by 65%, and we’ll be seeking to solidify Iowa’s prevention and cessation

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effort.”

“Through our efforts, we will redouble our efforts in 2012 to make Iowa, in fact, one of the healthiest states in the Nation,” Huppert concluded.

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