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SMITH BILL PROVIDING \$6 MILLION TO CANCER INSTITUTE ADVANCES

TRENTON - A bill sponsored by Senator Bob Smith to provide a supplemental appropriation of \$6 million to the central New Jersey affiliate of the Cancer Institute of New Jersey (CINJ) for comprehensive care and research was approved by the Assembly Appropriations Committee yesterday by a vote of 8-0.

"For too long, our State has battled with the image of New Jersey as a 'cancer cluster' State, but we're making headway in key areas of research and treatment," said Senator Smith, D-Middlesex and Somerset. "We must sustain the State's investment if we're going to continue our positive progress in seeking a cure and providing first-rate care for New Jersey's residents who are diagnosed with cancer."

The bill, S-1862, would provide a supplemental appropriation of \$6 million to the Department of Health and Senior services to increase the grant awarded to CINJ's central Jersey affiliate, Robert Wood Johnson Hospital in New Brunswick, for the Fiscal Year 2005. In June, CINJ was awarded \$18 million during the FY2005 Budget negotiations to be split between North and South Jersey affiliates, but with the inclusion of the \$6 million supplemental bill, central New Jersey would also have access to services as well.

"New Jersey's efforts to combat and treat cancer have been topnotch, and our regional approach to Cancer Institute funding gives all New Jerseyans local access to nationally-acclaimed services," said Senator Smith. "Rather than relying on neighboring states and far-flung specialized hospitals, the regional approach we're taking with CINJ ensures that New Jerseyans do not have to travel more than an hour to see cancer treatment specialists who are recognized throughout the country for being at the top of their game. We're bringing the best in care right to the patients."

The bill now awaits approval by the full Assembly, before going to the Governor's Office for final approval. The State Senate approved the bill in December.

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