

~~WHEREAS, Any framework for conquering cancer and tobacco related diseases requires a commitment of resources to many related areas, including education, prevention and early detection, treatment and supportive care, research, and surveillance and evaluation; and~~

~~WHEREAS, The University of Maryland Medical System, Baltimore, which includes the University of Maryland School of Medicine and the University of Maryland Medical Center System, and The Johns Hopkins University are the State's only two academic health centers and serve the health needs of the entire State of Maryland;~~

~~WHEREAS, The cost of providing Medicare plus Choice managed care benefits exceeded the income from premiums for these programs and thus has caused managed care organizations to leave fourteen counties as medically underserved areas in Maryland; and~~

~~WHEREAS, It is the intent of the Maryland General Assembly to provide an incentive to managed care organizations to provide Medicare plus Choice programs to seniors in those areas who have no Medicare managed care or are in medically underserved areas; and~~

~~WHEREAS, The General Assembly recognizes that the State's receipt of large sums of money under the Master Tobacco Settlement over a long period of time creates a unique opportunity for the State to address problems relating to tobacco use and cancer in a logical, planned, and committed fashion; and~~

~~WHEREAS, It is the intent of the General Assembly that the State coordinate its use of the Cigarette Restitution Fund in a logical, planned, and committed fashion so as to create a lasting legacy of public health initiatives that result in a reduction of both tobacco use and morbidity and mortality in the State from cancer and tobacco related diseases and otherwise benefit the health and welfare of the State's residents; now, therefore,~~

Preamble

WHEREAS, Cigarette smoking is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Each year the use of tobacco products kills over 7,500 Marylanders; and

WHEREAS, Tobacco is a risk factor for the top four leading causes of death in Maryland (heart disease, stroke, cancer, and pulmonary disease); and

WHEREAS, Among Maryland adolescents, smoking prevalence increased during the 1990s after several years of decline; and

WHEREAS, In 1997, the direct and indirect costs of tobacco related diseases increased by 2% and cost Marylanders over \$1.8 billion; and