

WHEREAS, Certain demographic groups remain at higher risk for tobacco use and often bear a disproportionate share of the human and economic cost of using tobacco products; and

WHEREAS, Tobacco is a leading risk factor in the development of many cancers, including cancer of the cervix, pancreas, kidney, bladder, esophagus, oral cavity and pharynx, larynx, and lung; and

WHEREAS, No single factor determines patterns of tobacco use; the patterns result from a complex interaction of multiple factors, such as socioeconomic status, cultural characteristics, stress, biological events, targeted marketing, tobacco pricing, and varying capacities of local communities to launch and sustain comprehensive tobacco control activities; and

WHEREAS, Cancer is the second leading cause of death in Maryland and one of every five deaths in Maryland is due to cancer; and

WHEREAS, Each year approximately 24,000 Marylanders are diagnosed with cancer and more than 10,000 Marylanders die of cancer; and

WHEREAS, Maryland's cancer incidence and mortality rates are consistently higher than national rates; and

WHEREAS, The burden of cancer differs among racial and ethnic groups, with cancer incidence and mortality rates higher for African Americans and certain other minority groups; and

WHEREAS, There are areas and neighborhoods of cancer clusters; and

WHEREAS, Studies show that financial barriers to cancer screening, early detection services, and treatment are significant factors in the disparities relating to cancer incidence and mortality; and

WHEREAS, Any framework for conquering cancer 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 General Assembly recognizes that the State's receipt of large sums of money under the Master Settlement Agreement (executed by the State and participating tobacco manufacturers) 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 rates for cancer and tobacco-related diseases in the State and otherwise benefit the health and welfare of the State's residents; now, therefore,

~~SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND, That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:~~