

WHEREAS, The disease is considered to be such a public health threat that the United States Department of Health and Human Services has initiated a comprehensive plan to address this significant health problem, beginning with the identification of, and notification to, hundreds of thousands of persons who are inadvertently exposed to hepatitis C through blood transfusions; and

WHEREAS, In the absence of a vaccine for hepatitis C, emphasis must be placed on other means of awareness and prevention of this disease, including, but not limited to, education of persons at high risk for hepatitis C as defined by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as police officers, firefighters, health care workers, and the general public; and

WHEREAS, Educating the public and health care community throughout the State about hepatitis C will ensure an optimal approach to controlling this lethal disease; now, therefore,

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

**Article - Health - General**

SUBTITLE 10. HEPATITIS C ADVISORY COUNCIL.

18-1001.

THERE IS A STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HEPATITIS C.

18-1002.

(A) IN THIS SUBTITLE THE FOLLOWING WORDS HAVE THE MEANINGS INDICATED.

(B) "ADVISORY COUNCIL" MEANS THE STATE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HEPATITIS C.

(C) "HCV" MEANS THE HEPATITIS C VIRUS.

(D) "SECRETARY" MEANS THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE.

18-1003.

(A) (1) THE ADVISORY COUNCIL CONSISTS OF ~~15~~ 16 MEMBERS.

(2) OF THE ~~15~~ 16 MEMBERS:

(I) ONE SHALL BE A MEMBER OF THE SENATE OF MARYLAND, APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE;

(II) ONE SHALL BE A MEMBER OF THE HOUSE OF DELEGATES, APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE;

(III) ONE SHALL BE THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE OR THE SECRETARY'S DESIGNEE;