

WHEREAS, Many minority groups suffer disproportionately from six areas of health concern: cancer, infant mortality, cardiovascular disease, HIV/AIDS, immunization, and diabetes; and

WHEREAS, More than 75 percent of AIDS cases are in minority groups, the prevalence of diabetes is 70 percent higher among African Americans than whites, diabetes is twice as likely to occur in Hispanics than whites, cardiovascular disease is the leading cause of death for racial and ethnic groups, infant death rates among African Americans, Native Americans, Alaska Natives, and Hispanics are well above the national average of deaths per live births, and the incidence rate for lung cancer in African American men is about 50 percent higher than white men; and

WHEREAS, The demographic changes that are anticipated over the next decade magnify the importance of addressing disparities in health status. Groups currently experiencing poorer health status are expected to grow as a proportion of the total U.S. population; therefore, the future health of America as a whole will be influenced substantially by our success in improving the health of these racial and ethnic minorities; and

WHEREAS, ~~Eliminating~~ Reducing racial and ethnic disparities in these six areas will require effective interventions for prevention and treatment; and

WHEREAS, The Department of Health and Human Services has committed the nation to an ambitious goal by the year 2010 ~~eliminating~~ of reducing the disparities in the six areas of health status experienced by racial and ethnic minority populations while continuing the progress made in improving the overall health of the American people; and

WHEREAS, Achieving the goal set by the Department of Health and Human Services will require a major national commitment to identify and address the underlying causes of higher levels of disease and disability in racial and ethnic minority communities, including poverty, lack of access to quality health services, environmental hazards in homes and neighborhoods, and the need for effective prevention programs tailored to specific community needs; now, therefore,

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

#### Article - Health - General

20-502.

(A) There is a nonprofit Maryland Health Care Foundation established to: ~~[promote public awareness of the need to provide more timely and cost-effective care for Marylanders without health insurance and to] receive moneys that can be used to provide financial support to programs that expand access to health care services for uninsured AND ELIMINATE HEALTH DISPARITIES FOR Marylanders.~~

~~(B) THE MARYLAND HEALTH CARE FOUNDATION SHALL PROMOTE PUBLIC AWARENESS OF THE NEED TO:~~