

## Preamble

WHEREAS, Osteoporosis, a bone-thinning disease, is a major public health problem that poses a threat to the health and quality of life to as many as 25 million Americans; and

WHEREAS, The 1.5 million fractures each year that result from osteoporosis cause pain, disability, immobility, and social isolation, affecting quality of life and threatening the ability to live independently; and

WHEREAS, Because osteoporosis progresses silently and without sensation over many years, and many cases remain undiagnosed, its first symptom is often a fracture, typically of the hip, spine, or wrist; and

WHEREAS, One of two women and one of five men will suffer an osteoporosis fracture in their lifetime; and

WHEREAS, A woman's risk of hip fracture is equal to her combined risk of breast, uterine, and ovarian cancer; and

WHEREAS, The annual direct and indirect costs of osteoporosis to the health care system are estimated to have been as high as \$18 billion in 1993, and are expected to rise to \$60-\$80 billion by the year 2020; and

WHEREAS, Since osteoporosis progresses silently and currently has no cure, prevention, early diagnosis, and treatment are key to reducing the prevalence of and devastation from this disease; and

WHEREAS, Although there exists a large quantity of public information about osteoporosis, it remains inadequately disseminated and not tailored to meet the needs of specific population groups; and

WHEREAS, Most people, including physicians, health care providers, and government agencies, continue to lack knowledge in the prevention, detection, and treatment of the disease; and

WHEREAS, Experts in the field of osteoporosis believe that with greater awareness of the value of prevention among medical experts, service providers, and the public, osteoporosis will be preventable and treatable in the future, thereby reducing the costs of long-term care; and

WHEREAS, Osteoporosis is a multigenerational issue because building strong bones during youth and preserving them during adulthood may prevent fractures in later life; and

WHEREAS, Educating the public and health care community throughout the State about this potentially devastating disease is of paramount importance and is in every respect in the public interest and to the benefit of all residents of the State; now, therefore,

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