



Maryland  
CHAPTER

1783 Forest Drive  
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February 17, 2020

**Re: SUPPORT FOR HB 732 – Electronic Smoking Devices, Other Tobacco Products, and Cigarettes - Taxation and Regulation**

The Maryland Chapter of the American College of Cardiology would like to offer its strong support for House Bill 732 which would increase the state sales tax on cigarettes.

While rates of smoking are, thankfully, in decline, smoking-related illness including heart disease, remain a substantial public health burden. Nicotine is a highly addictive substance which can ensnare teens, often under the influence of peer pressure, and lead to a lifetime of health problems. The Surgeon General has called the rise of the cost of cigarettes ‘one of the most effective tobacco interventions.’<sup>1</sup> The Campaign for Tobacco free kids estimates that an increase of two dollars in the current tax would decrease teen smoking by twenty percent in our state.<sup>2</sup> Because smoking-related disease takes many years to develop, it is crucial that the youth of our state are discouraged at every turn from starting a habit which can lead to lifelong addiction.

**The Maryland Chapter of the American College of Cardiology respectfully requests the committee give HB 732 a favorable report.**

Sincerely,

Joseph E. Marine, MD, FACC  
President

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<sup>1</sup>U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), *The Health Consequences of Smoking: 50 Years of Progress. A Report of the Surgeon General*, Atlanta, GA: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), National Center for ChronicDiseasePreventionandHealthPromotion,OfficeonSmokingandHealth,2014. <http://www.surgeongeneral.gov/library/reports/50-years-of-progress/index.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Projections are based on research findings that nationally, each 10% increase in the retail price of cigarettes reduces youth smoking by 6.5%, young adult prevalence by 3.25%, adult prevalence by 2%, and total cigarette consumption by about 4% (adjusted down to account for tax evasion effects). However, the impact of the tax increase varies from state-to-state, based on the starting pack price. Significant tax increases generate new revenues because the higher tax rate per pack brings in more new revenue than is lost from the tax-related drop in total pack sales.