



February 27, 2026

The Honorable Jheanelle K. Wilkins
Chair, House Ways and Means Committee
Room 131, House Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

**RE: House Bill 1576 – Sales and Use Tax – Electronic Smoking Devices and Vaping Liquid
– Maryland Pediatric Cancer Fund**

Dear Chair Wilkins,

The Maryland State Council on Cancer Control (Council) respectfully submits this letter of support for House Bill 1576 (HB 1576), legislation that would increase the sales and use tax on electronic smoking devices and vaping liquid and dedicate a portion of the resulting revenue to the Maryland Pediatric Cancer Fund. HB 1576 represents a strong, evidence-based policy approach to reducing youth and adult tobacco use while generating sustainable funding for pediatric cancer research.

Reducing Tobacco and Vaping Use Through Evidence-Based Tax Policy

A substantial body of public health research demonstrates that increasing the price of tobacco products - including electronic smoking devices and vaping products - leads to reduced initiation, decreased consumption, and increased cessation, particularly among youth and young adults. Price sensitivity is especially pronounced among adolescents, making excise and sales taxes one of the most effective tools for preventing nicotine addiction and long-term tobacco-related disease. By increasing the tax rate on these products, HB 1576 advances proven strategies to reduce use and protect public health.

Protecting Children and Adolescents From Nicotine Addiction

Electronic smoking devices and flavored vaping products have contributed to rising nicotine use among Maryland's youth. Nicotine exposure during adolescence can harm brain development and increases the likelihood of lifelong addiction. HB 1576 helps deter youth access and use by raising prices on products that are disproportionately marketed to and used by young people.

Investing in Pediatric Cancer Research

HB 1576's dedication of new revenue to the Maryland Pediatric Cancer Fund is a meaningful and innovative approach to aligning prevention policy with cancer research investment. Pediatric cancers remain a leading cause of disease-related death among children, yet research funding has historically lagged behind adult cancers. Ensuring a stable funding stream for pediatric cancer research supports innovation in prevention, diagnosis, treatment, and survivorship.



Aligning With Maryland's Comprehensive Cancer Control Goals

The Council supports policies that reduce exposure to cancer risk factors while strengthening the State's capacity to address cancer across the lifespan. HB 1576 aligns with Maryland's comprehensive cancer control priorities by combining effective tobacco control policy with direct investment in pediatric cancer research, without supplanting existing appropriations.

For these reasons, the Maryland State Council on Cancer Control strongly supports HB 1576 and respectfully urges the House Ways and Means Committee to give the bill favorable consideration.

Thank you for your leadership and continued commitment to public health and cancer prevention in Maryland.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Taofeek Owonikoko".

Taofeek Owonikoko, MD
Chair
Maryland State Council on Cancer Control