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American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™
Maryland Chapter



TO: The Honorable Dereck E. Davis, Chair
Members, House Economic Matters Committee
The Honorable Marice Morales

FROM: Pamela Metz Kasemeyer
J. Steven Wise
Danna L. Kauffman
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DATE: February 28, 2018

RE: **SUPPORT** – House Bill 953 – *Tobacco Products – Minimum Age and Civil Fines*

The Maryland State Medical Society and the Maryland Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics submit this letter of **support** for House Bill 953.

House Bill 953 raises the minimum age to purchase tobacco products to 21-years of age. Under current law, the minimum age to purchase tobacco is 18-years old. It is well recognized that the vast majority of smokers begin using tobacco in their teenage years. Raising the minimum age required to purchase tobacco products will further limit adolescents access to tobacco with the goal of both decreasing the prevalence of tobacco use amongst adolescents and reducing the number of adults who smoke; who may not have started smoking were it not for access as an adolescent, when behaviors and choices are not well-informed and/or they have not considered the long-term consequences.

According to the thirty-second Surgeon General's report, *The Health Consequences of Smoking – 50 Years of Progress*, smoking rates among teens and adults are less than half what they were in 1964. However, 42-million American adults and 3-million middle and high school students continue to smoke. Further, even though smokers consume fewer cigarettes than 50-years ago, changes in the design and composition of cigarettes put smokers at a higher risk of developing lung cancer. The Surgeon General estimates that the economic costs attributable to smoking and exposure to tobacco smoke from both direct medical costs and lost productivity approach \$300 billion annually.

Passage of House Bill 953 will help prevent adolescents from becoming smokers and reflects Maryland's historical commitment to reducing tobacco use and the associated health consequences. A favorable report is requested.

For more information call:

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