

MEDCHI, THE MARYLAND STATE MEDICAL SOCIETY
HOUSE OF DELEGATES

Resolution 2-20

INTRODUCED BY: Board of Trustees (submitted by request of Health Care for All)
SUBJECT: Health Equity Resource Communities Initiative

1 Whereas, the Maryland patient health initiative, Health Care for All, submitted a request to
2 MedChi to sign on the following Health Equity Resource Communities Initiative:

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4 Whereas, all Marylanders deserve access to high-quality, affordable health care;

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6 Whereas, health inequities based on race, ethnicity, and place of residence persist
7 throughout the state, as shown in maternal and infant mortality rates and other measures;

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9 Whereas, the COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed these health inequities and
10 highlighted the need to address them and otherwise improve health outcomes in our state;

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12 Whereas, in underserved areas of the state, people with chronic conditions such as
13 hypertension, heart disease, asthma, diabetes, and substance and mental health disorders
14 have worse health outcomes and are less able to get the care and treatment they need;

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16 Whereas, supporting health and reducing preventable hospital admissions will result in
17 lower overall health care costs, including lower insurance premiums for everyone;

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19 Whereas, the 2012-2016 Health Enterprise Zones Program successfully increased access
20 to health resources, improved residents' health, reduced hospital admissions, and created
21 cost savings;

22
23 Whereas, the 2011 alcohol beverage sales tax increase led to significant reductions in
24 underage drinking, binge drinking, driving under the influence, and sexually transmitted
25 infections;

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27 Whereas, Maryland has not raised its alcohol beverage sales tax since 2011 and its rate
28 has fallen behind that of Washington D.C.;

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30 Whereas, raising the state's alcohol beverage sales tax will generate necessary funds and
31 reduce drinking, including by underage Marylanders and heavy drinkers, which in turn
32 will save lives and reduce health care costs;

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34 Therefore be it resolved, that the undersigned organization supports increasing the state
35 alcohol beverage sales tax by one cent per dollar to save lives and reduce health care

36 costs caused by alcohol overuse, and supports using the funds raised by the alcohol tax
37 increase to:

- 38
- 39 1) Create Health Equity Resource Communities, modeled after the former Health
40 Enterprise Zone Program, in locations around the state to address poor health
41 outcomes that contribute to racial, ethnic, and geographic health inequities, and
 - 42 2) Create more community-based prevention, treatment, and recovery support programs
43 to address substance use and mental health disorders; and
- 44

45 Whereas, MedChi policy supports health enterprise zones and alcohol taxes, therefore be it

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47 Resolved, that MedChi support Health Care for All's Health Equity Resource Communities
48 Initiative.

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51 Fiscal Note: Included in existing legislative advocacy budget.