Whereas, one in three Maryland children is overweight or obese; and

Whereas, more kids than ever are being diagnosed with adult-like diseases such as type 2 diabetes, cardiovascular disease, high cholesterol level, and hypertension; and

Whereas, sugar-sweetened beverages are the single greatest contributor to the obesity epidemic; and

Whereas, kids who drink sugar-sweetened beverages drinks daily are 3x times more likely to be overweight or obese and 7x times more likely to be diagnosed with type 2 diabetes than their peers who don’t drink sugary drinks; and

Whereas, the cost in lives, health, and resources to the state of Maryland from obesity and its related chronic illnesses is staggering; and

Whereas, obesity and its related chronic illnesses are the single largest preventable cause of death and disease for both men and women; and

Whereas, increasing physical activity has had a modest impact on reducing obesity and its related chronic illnesses; and

Whereas, as physicians, we have a duty to espouse the best possible preventive health measures for our patients and the public, including reducing consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages; and

Whereas, research on sugar-sweetened beverage taxes has found that implementing a sugar-sweetened beverage tax will save lives, reduce healthcare costs and increase state revenue; and

Whereas, sugar-sweetened beverages are defined as beverages to which caloric sweeteners are added by the manufacturer or bottler. These beverages include bottled carbonated soft drinks (soda); fruit, sports, and energy drinks; enhanced waters; and sweetened teas as well as sugar-sweetened syrups that are used to make non-bottled SSBs (e.g., fountain drinks and sugary drinks containing coffee); and

Whereas, since the rise in obesity rates clearly adversely affect health care any tax funds should go to health care or public health programs; therefore be it

Resolved, that MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, work towards implementing and supporting measures that will reduce consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages in the state of Maryland; and be it further

Resolved, that MedChi, The Maryland State Medical Society, advocate that Maryland implement a sugar-sweetened beverage tax and would require 100% of those funds to be dedicated to health care or public health programs in the state of Maryland.

As amended and adopted by the House of Delegates at its meeting on September 27, 2014.