

**A Resolution In Support of  
the Resolution titled "*Faith United Against Tobacco in Virginia*"  
and  
the Resolution titled "*We Support the Maryland Health Care for All!*"**

Sponsors:

Jerry Foltz, Nancy Clark, Denise Giacomozzi-May, Rebecca West, Janet Parker, Barbara Brown Zikmund, Doug Griffin, Kwame Osei Reed, Hank Fairman, Al Fuertes, Doug Hodges

Adopted by the Potomac Association at the Spring Meeting of the Association, May 1, 2010

WHEREAS:

The undersigned members of the Potomac Association-United Church of Christ are convinced of by the arguments presented in the attached documents;

AND:

The Potomac Association holds a unique opportunity to stand as a prophetic voice to the three jurisdictions of the District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia:

AND:

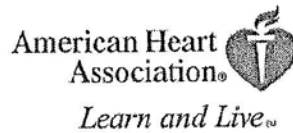
The United Church of Christ has long stood as a prophetic voice in addressing "the health impacts of tobacco usage on children, teenagers and their families" (including 01-GS-44, from where this quote is taken).

AND

That the Delegates and Clergy gathered at the 2010 Spring Meeting of the Potomac Association-United Church of Christ affirmed both resolutions by majority vote

BE IT RESOLVED that the resolutions be distributed to the congregations within the appropriate jurisdiction for their consideration.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these resolutions be communicated to the Delegates and Clergy gathered at the 2010 Annual Meeting of the Central Atlantic Conference, for their consideration and adoption.



## THE PROBLEM OF TOBACCO USE IN VIRGINIA

- 8,100 Virginia children become regular smokers each year.
- 9,200 people die from smoking-caused disease each year in Virginia
- Health care costs in Virginia directly related to smoking total \$2.8 billion.
- Medicaid costs alone are \$401 million a year.

### PROVEN SOLUTIONS

#### **Increase the cigarette tax and increases the tax on other tobacco products.**

Increasing Virginia's low tobacco taxes are a win-win-win for the state. It's a *public health win* that health authorities, and even the cigarette companies, agree is the single most effective way to reduce smoking, especially among kids. It's a *fiscal win* that will raise millions in new revenue for the state, as well as reduce taxpayer-financed health care costs. It's also a *political win* because it's popular with the public.

At only 30 cents a pack, Virginia's cigarette tax is still one of the lowest, 49th in the nation! Compare that to the national average which is \$1.34, and the cost of smoking to Virginia, which is \$6.27 per pack!

#### **Protect everyone's right to breathe clean air by adopting smoke-free policies that cover all workplaces and public places.**

Secondhand smoke is a proven cause of heart disease and cancer in non-smokers. Virginia took a step in the right direction by making most restaurants and bars in the state smoke-free as of December 1, 2009. But all workers and citizens deserve the same protection. No one should have to be exposed to secondhand smoke to hold a job.

#### **Increase funding for tobacco prevention and cessation.**

The CDC recommends that the state spend a minimum of \$103.2 million a year on proven programs to prevent and reduce tobacco use. Virginia will spend less than \$14 million this year, or just over 13% of the recommendation. Tobacco prevention works! States that invest in tobacco prevention see as much as \$3 in savings for every \$1 they spend on science-based tobacco prevention and cessation programs. If Virginia invested the CDC recommended amount, it could achieve the following results:

- **Reduction to youth smoking rates: -17.7%**
- **Fewer state kids growing up to become addicted adult smokers: -84,000**
- **Fewer kids growing up to die prematurely from smoking: -26,800**
- **Related reduced future healthcare expenditures in state: -\$1.4 billion**
  - State Medicaid Program's reduced healthcare spending: -\$178.2 million

**FAITH UNITED AGAINST TOBACCO IN VIRGINIA RESOLUTION**

**WHEREAS:** A major tenet of every faith is spiritual well-being and the promotion of good physical and mental health, and tobacco use undermines both;

**WHEREAS:** Every year, more than 9,200 Virginians die horrible but preventable deaths caused by tobacco addiction, due to both smoking and other forms of tobacco use, and thousands more suffer from tobacco-caused disability and disease;

**WHEREAS:** 66,400 high-school aged youth in Virginia are current smokers (15.5%); and another 9,300 Virginia children become addicted smokers every year; in addition nearly 13% of high school boys use spit or smokeless tobacco;

**WHEREAS:** Exposure to secondhand smoke in workplaces and homes kills and harms thousands of Virginians every year;

**WHEREAS:** Virginia's health care expenditures caused by tobacco use total over \$2.8 billion each year, including more than \$401 million in annual tobacco-caused expenditures by the State Medicaid program;

**WHEREAS:** Only 4% of the \$310 million Virginia receives from the tobacco settlement and tobacco taxes each year is used for prevention, and that is less than 13% of the amount recommended by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC).

**WHEREAS:** The public health community has worked with agricultural leaders for more than a decade to secure and maintain significant funding to assist tobacco farmers with diversification (50% of the Virginia tobacco settlement revenue), to support our tobacco-dependent communities and family farms, and to promote and continue our rich farming heritage;

**BE IT RESOLVED:** That the undersigned Virginia faith organization endorses comprehensive and effective public policy measures recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other experts to prevent and reduce smoking and other tobacco use in the state particularly among children and pregnant women, including:

- > Increasing Virginia's tobacco tax rates to at least the nationwide state average to reduce teen smoking and help fund Virginia's health care needs;
- > Prohibiting smoking in all workplaces, including all restaurants and bars;
- > Full Funding of Virginia's tobacco prevention and cessation programs at a level as close as possible to the \$103.2 million per year as suggested by the CDC;
- > Ensuring no state government preemption of local efforts to prevent and reduce tobacco use or its harms.

Name of Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Number of Members \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_

Address, City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone, Fax, E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please return to:**  
Virginia Interfaith Center For Public Policy  
1716 East Franklin Street  
Richmond, VA 23223  
Fax (804) 767-4425  
[ali@virginiainterfaithcenter.org](mailto:ali@virginiainterfaithcenter.org)

# We support the Maryland Health Care for All! Plan

**Because** winning quality, affordable health care for all Marylanders will save lives, reduce health care disparities, AND lower health care costs for everyone; and

**Because** those with insurance are having a harder time affording the quality care they need while many, especially those with pre-existing medical conditions, are denied health care coverage; and

**Because** everyone needs to do their fair share to improve access to health care and keep costs down, including individuals, businesses, and government; and

**Because** over 762,000 people in Maryland have no health insurance coverage, putting their families' health at great risk and substantially adding to the costs of families with insurance; and

**Because** we must build on the expansion of health care coverage for over 100,000 uninsured Marylanders achieved by the Governor's Working Families and Small Business Health Care Coverage Act of 2007.

## My Organization Supports:

**The new Maryland Health Care for All! Plan detailed at [www.healthcareforall.com](http://www.healthcareforall.com) that:**

Makes health care more affordable for all individuals and businesses in Maryland

Allows small businesses and individuals to pool their numbers and resources to get better health care deals

Protects all Marylanders from catastrophic health care costs that bankrupt families and ruin lives

Prevents insurance companies from wrongly denying coverage or charging unfairly high premiums to patients,

especially those with chronic health conditions

Expands coverage in the private sector and Medicaid for those who truly cannot afford any other coverage

Increases access to core services that keep people healthy, like preventive screenings

Invests in public health strategies and fully funds programs to reduce alcohol, drug, and tobacco addiction

Calls for businesses and individuals to pay their fair share. Businesses will contribute through a new 2%

payroll assessment; uninsured individuals will be required to purchase health coverage if quality, affordable

coverage is available; and taxes on alcohol and tobacco will be raised to improve public health and save lives

Guarantees everyone access to the quality, affordable health care they need and deserve

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Name of Organization (*please print*)

Number of Members



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Authorized Signature    Contact person (*please print*)    Date

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Organization Street Address    County

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City    State    Zip

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Phone    Fax

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Email

**Best way to contact you:**    Email    Phone    Fax

**Return to:** Maryland Health Care for All!, 2600 St Paul St, Baltimore, MD 21218; fax 410-235-8963 or join online at <http://www.healthcareforall.com> (Call 866.433.8451 with questions)