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Suite 2300
Baltimore, Maryland 21202
June 15, 2015

To: Members and Chair
The Howard County Council

From: Michaeline R. Fedder, MA, Director of
Government Relations, Maryland

Re: Enthusiastic Support for CB 28-2015

The American Heart Association unequivocally and enthusiastically supports CB 28-2015, which, when passed and enacted into law, will treat electronic smoking devices the same way that “regular” cigarettes are treated under Howard County’s Smoking in Public Places Subtitle 6 of the Health and Social Services Title of the Howard County Code.

Of most significance to us is that these very dangerous devices could no longer be used in indoor public places including restaurants, bars, workplaces and public transportation. The bill states very clearly that the intent is **“to protect the public health, safety and welfare.”**

This is about health and nothing else!!!

In the past year alone, an abundance of research has been conducted documenting the danger to the e-cigarette user and to those in the presence of the user. A recent study, conducted at our own Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, supports the contention that exposure to e-cigarette vapor is dangerous and can adversely affect the lungs and the immune system.

Electronic cigarettes are battery-operated devices, electronic delivery systems that vaporize e-liquids containing nicotine, a dangerous, addictive product, as well as other toxic chemicals including propylene glycol, a component found in automotive anti-freeze, formaldehyde, nitrosamines, metals and many others whose names I cannot pronounce.

Of particular concern is that the device manufacturers, of which there are already hundreds and hundreds, are adding flavoring to their poisonous brew, flavoring that has particular appeal to children. And it is the blatant marketing to young people that AHA finds especially onerous. The products are being touted as “low-risk,” lulling the kids into a false sense of security. The reality is that they are a gateway drug to which young users become addicted quite rapidly. These same young users probably would never start smoking regular cigarettes. And the data are showing that the use of these cigarettes by middle and high school children has doubled between 2011 and 2012.

The manufacturers are also promoting e-cigarettes as products that help current smokers quit...but in reality addicted smokers are using the devices in addition to their regular cigarettes when they are in venues in which the use of regular cigarettes is forbidden by law. (This is known as Dual-Use)

Whereas regular cigarettes are covered by strong laws that govern their use and marketing, electronic cigarettes have a free pass. We cannot continue to let that happen. Clearly, more studies are needed, and they are happening but the evidence to date indicates that there is a need to control electronic cigarettes. The Medical and Public Health world are of one voice about this.

The only people who would disagree are the tobacco manufacturers and the bar and restaurant people who will tell you, just as they did leading up to the statewide 2007 CIA Act, that we will put people and business out of commission. Well we passed CIA and the bar scene is thriving.

We urge you to recognize the need to step up to the plate and pass CB 28-2015, with implementation to start immediately. **THIS IS ABOUT HEALTH!** This is about the health of people who live, work and play in your outstanding county. They deserve your support of this bill.