



TO: Baltimore City Health Department

FROM: Melina Davis-Martin, President & CEO

RE: Proposed Regulations Banning the Sale of Single, Cheap Cigars in Baltimore City

DATE: June 10, 2008

The American Lung Association of Maryland is committed to helping reduce the rate of death and disease associated with tobacco use in all its forms. Tobacco control is a top priority for our organization, as is reducing the incidence of youth smoking. Smoking kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined.

The American Lung Association of Maryland strongly supports Baltimore City Health Department's efforts to address the problem of youth access to cheap, single cigars in Baltimore City by prohibiting the sale of cigars under the proposed regulation to packages of **five or more**. Increasing the minimum price to purchase the popular, cheap cigars five-fold would put the products in line with a pack of cigarettes.

Given that the economic impact of smoking in Maryland is \$3.7 billion in annual health care costs and smoking-caused productivity loss combined, and that an estimated 108,000 youth in our state now under 18 will ultimately die prematurely from smoking, it is prudent to take this step to decrease smoking levels and lessen the economic burden that tobacco inflicts.

The American Lung Association of Maryland supports Baltimore City Health Department's aggressive stance on the proposed regulation potentially taking effect 30 days after adoption. Based on the fact that manufacturers already market many of the popular, cheap cigars in packages of five or more & packages generally contain health warnings, this change could be readily facilitated .