



MARYLAND CITIZENS' HEALTH INITIATIVE

2600 ST. PAUL STREET BALTIMORE, MD 21218

P: (410)235-9000

F: (410)235-8963

WWW.HEALTHCAREFORALL.COM

Health Care Success in Maryland since January 2007

- ✓ The Governor and General Assembly enacted a 3% alcohol specific sales tax increase (to take effect July 01, 2011) - the first alcohol specific tax increase in Maryland since 1972. This life-saving alcohol tax legislation is projected to raise at least \$87 million in new revenues and will save many lives by reducing underage drinking and alcohol abuse. We in the public health community will work with Governor O'Malley and the General Assembly to ensure the money is used to fund critical health care and community services; including, health care coverage, services for people with developmental disabilities and mental health needs, tobacco, drug and alcohol prevention and treatment, and health care worker training.
- ✓ Under the leadership of Governor Martin O'Malley, Lt. Governor Anthony Brown, and the Maryland General Assembly, Maryland has gone from 44th to 14th in the nation in providing health care coverage to low-income adults and has expanded health care coverage to over 250,000 parents, children, and seniors.
- ✓ The Governor's Working Families and Small Business Health Coverage Act of 2007 provided health care coverage to over 70,000 uninsured Maryland parents and caregivers, many of whom would have otherwise had to use hospital emergency rooms for their health care needs. This in turn would increase what we all pay in higher premiums for uncompensated hospital care. Also passed in 2007, but not yet implemented due to economic constraints, is a Medicaid expansion for over 100,000 uninsured adults without dependents.
- ✓ The Governor's Working Families and Small Business Health Coverage Act of 2007 also provided substantial grants to over 200 Maryland small businesses that had previously been unable to provide health care for their employees.



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- ✓ Funding for the Governor's Working Families and Small Business Health Coverage Act of 2007 was made possible by a one-dollar per pack increase in the state cigarette tax. This reduced the number of packs of cigarettes sold in Maryland by 74 million (and thereby saving thousands of lives from the horrors of tobacco caused illness and death and giving Maryland the 6th lowest smoking rate in the country) and raised an additional \$144 million per year. This revenue is almost identical to the state's cost for the health care expansion. Between 1998 to 2009, Marylanders who smoke decreased by 32%; double the national average of 16%.
- ✓ The O'Malley/Brown Administration has worked with the General Assembly and health care advocacy groups to locate and enroll over 85,000 children who are eligible for state health care coverage. New effective outreach and enrollment strategies include the Kids First Act, the Foster Kids Act, as well as reaching out to Medicaid eligible children in Baltimore City through the school lunch program – all of these inventive laws have aided in the exceptional enrollment of Maryland's children. The Administration has also worked to make sure that these children have proper dental care to avoid another tragedy like the death of young Deamonte Driver.
- ✓ The Governor and General Assembly enacted legislation that increased the age limit from 18 to 25 for young people to stay on their parents' health care plans. This allows thousands of Maryland's young adults to keep health care coverage while they are students or look for jobs that offer health insurance.
- ✓ The Governor and General Assembly, with substantial assistance from CareFirst BlueCross BlueShield, enacted legislation that closes the prescription drug "donut hole" for many Maryland seniors by covering more of their prescription drug costs. To date, over 23,000 seniors have enrolled and benefited from this legislation.
- ✓ The Governor and General Assembly enacted legislation to reduce the burden of hospital debt.