F R O M	Name & Title	Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D. Commissioner of Health	**Health Department**
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street	**MEMO**
	Subject	Council Bill 09-0271 – Tobacco Products - Unpackaged Cigarettes or Cigars	

To: President and Members   February 4, 2009
        of the City Council
        c/o
        409 City Hall

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) supports Council Bill 09-0271.   This bill would strengthen the prohibition against the sale or transfer of unpackaged cigarettes and extend that prohibition to include certain unpackaged cigars; defining and redefining certain terms; provide for certain exceptions; provide for a special effective date; and generally relate to the sale or other distribution of unpackaged cigarettes and cigars.

This proposal is supported by 5 key points:

1. **There are significant health risks associated with cigar use**

These include cancer, cardiovascular disease, and respiratory disease. By the age of 40, the average cigar smoker has lost 5 years of their life.

2. **Cheap, single cigars are widely available in Baltimore**

Single, cheap cigars can be found in many drug stores, pharmacies, and corner stores in Baltimore. A recent survey of 10 retail and corner stores by Health Department staff found the following brands for sale:

• Black and Mild • Phillies • Swisher Sweet • White Owl • The Game • Prime Time

Popular flavors include: • Strawberry• Watermelon • Peach • Cherry • Wild Apple • Grape

3. **Single cigars fail to have health warnings**

There is no state or federal law mandating health warnings on cigars. While several cigar manufacturers have agreed to include one of five Surgeon General warnings on cigar packaging and displays, single cigars generally often do not display health warnings.

4. **The sale of tobacco products individually or in small packs is associated with youth tobacco use.**

Because youth have less disposable income, their tobacco consumption is directly linked to the prices of tobacco products.

1