
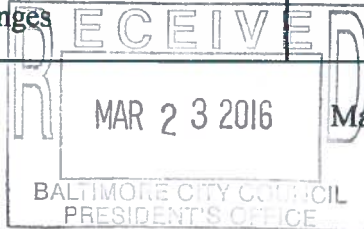


F R O M	Name & Title	Dr. Leana Wen <i>Leana Wen</i>	Health Department	
	Agency Name & Address	Health Department 1001 E. Fayette Street Baltimore, Maryland 21201		
	Subject	CB 16-0616 – Hookah Lounges		

To: President and Members  
of the City Council  
c/o 409 City Hall



March 30, 2016

The Baltimore City Health Department (BCHD) is pleased to have the opportunity to review Council Bill 16-0616 – Hookah Lounges. The purpose of this bill is to authorize to operation of hookah lounges within the City of Baltimore.

A hookah is a waterpipe used to smoke specially made tobacco that comes in different flavors, such as apple, mint, cherry, chocolate, coconut, licorice, cappuccino, and watermelon. Hookah is also called shisha, narghile, argileh, hubble-bubble, andgoza.<sup>i</sup> Tobacco use is unsafe in any form. 90% of lifelong tobacco user’s start before age 18 and hookah use among high schoolers nationwide nearly doubled in just one year from 5% in 2013 to almost 10% in 2014.<sup>ii</sup>

Baltimore’s indoor smoking laws are stronger and more progressive than state law, prohibiting smoking *tobacco or any other weed or plant product indoors*. This includes smoking hookah. Amending our law to allow the use of hookahs indoors would authorize the creation of a known health hazard in our community. **Overwhelming scientific evidence proves smoking hookah indoors poses the same, if not worse, health risks as smoking cigarettes and cigars.** Authorizing hookah lounges will roll back the progress we have made to reduce harmful exposure to secondhand smoke.

Although many users think it is less harmful, hookah smoking has many of the same health risks as cigarette smoking.<sup>iii</sup> **One hour of smoking hookah is the equivalent of smoking 100 cigarettes.**<sup>iv</sup> Smoking hookah is associated with serious illness such as lung cancer, periodontal disease, and low birth weight and there is growing evidence to suggest an association with oral cancer, esophageal cancer, and other respiratory diseases.<sup>v</sup>

Studies of tobacco-based and supposedly non-tobacco “herbal” shisha show that smoke from both preparations contains carbon monoxide and other toxic agents known to increase the risks for smoking-related cancers, heart disease, and lung disease.<sup>vi</sup> The charcoal used to heat the tobacco increases health risks by producing high levels of carbon monoxide, metals, and cancer-causing chemicals. Even after passing through water, hookah smoke has high levels of these toxic agents.<sup>vii</sup> **A study of Baltimore hookah lounges found that carbon monoxide levels exceeded occupational exposure guidelines** and that worker protection measures should be considered.<sup>viii</sup> Because all secondhand smoke has the potential to cause death, disability and disease, the World Health Organization recommends that waterpipes and hookahs be included with cigarettes in all clean indoor air policies.<sup>ix</sup>

*opposes*

Baltimore City led the way for clean indoor air laws in Maryland. We were the first jurisdiction in the state to enact these laws and we did so for good reason – to protect our residents, especially our youth, from the dangers of tobacco use and secondhand smoke. Smoking hookah poses the same, if not worse, dangers from secondhand smoke as cigarettes and other tobacco products. The Health Department strongly opposes efforts to roll back our laws to authorize a known health risk that is currently prohibited for good reason.

BCHD **strongly opposes** this legislation, and appreciates the opportunity to discuss this important issue. We will be present at the hearing to answer any questions the Council may have on this matter.

cc: Angela Gibson, Office of the Mayor  
Andrew Nicklas, Director of Legislative Affairs, Department of Health

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<sup>i</sup> CDC Fact Sheet – Hookahs- Smoking and Tobacco Use, September 14, 2015

[http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/tobacco\\_industry/hookahs/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/tobacco_industry/hookahs/)

<sup>ii</sup> Tobacco Use Among Middle and High School Students — United States, 2011–2014, CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, April 17, 2015. Available at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6414a3.htm>

<sup>iii</sup> CDC Fact Sheet – Hookahs- Smoking and Tobacco Use, September 14, 2015

[http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/tobacco\\_industry/hookahs/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/tobacco_industry/hookahs/)

<sup>iv</sup> Waterpipe tobacco smoking: health effects, research needs and recommended actions for regulators, 2nd Edition, WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation

<sup>v</sup> Waterpipe tobacco smoking: health effects, research needs and recommended actions for regulators, 2nd Edition, WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation

<sup>vi</sup> CDC Fact Sheet – Hookahs- Smoking and Tobacco Use, September 14, 2015

[http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/tobacco\\_industry/hookahs/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/tobacco_industry/hookahs/)

<sup>vii</sup> CDC Fact Sheet – Hookahs- Smoking and Tobacco Use, September 14, 2015

[http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/tobacco\\_industry/hookahs/](http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/tobacco_industry/hookahs/)

<sup>viii</sup> Waterpipe cafes in Baltimore, Maryland: Carbon monoxide, particulate matter, and nicotine exposure, *Journal of Exposure Science and Environmental Epidemiology* (2015) 25, 405–410; doi:10.1038/jes.2014.19; published online 16 April 2014

<sup>ix</sup> Waterpipe tobacco smoking: health effects, research needs and recommended actions for regulators, 2nd Edition, WHO Study Group on Tobacco Product Regulation