

**Maryland Department of Health**  
**Issuance of Alcoholic Beverages Licenses to Tobacconists Workgroup Meeting**  
**May 19, 2025**  
**2:00 - 3:00 pm**

**MINUTES**

**Attendees:**

Members:

Steven Arentz  
Finnie Pecunes Helmuth  
Nilesh Kalyanaraman  
Jeffrey Kelly  
Ronald Watson

Staff:

Victoria Marte-Tiburcio  
Christopher McGrath  
Clifford Mitchell  
Dana Moncrief  
Megan Sehr  
Jody Sheely

Public:

Thomas Akras  
Matthew Bohle  
Bill Casanelli  
Isai Hernandez  
Kathleen Hoke  
Lance Kilpatrick  
Glynn Loope  
James Price  
Abbey Rubeling  
Scott Tiffin  
Brooke Torton

**Meeting Notes:**

**Welcome & General Business**

- Nilesh Kalyanaraman opened the meeting and welcomed attendees.
- Jody Sheely conducted a roll call and provided an overview of the Open Meetings Act.
- The Workgroup adopted the April 28, 2025, meeting minutes.
- Nilesh Kalyanaraman provided an overview of the meeting.

**Discussion of Recommendations**

- Nilesh Kalyanaraman provided a summary of the statutory purpose.
- Cliff Mitchell provided an overview of the draft Workgroup report.
- Steven Arentz suggested the Workgroup clarify that the findings and recommendations do not involve cannabis and hemp-derived products.
- The Workgroup members discussed whether the BYO statewide permit would be issued by local jurisdictions.
  - Jeff Kelly recommended that local boards receive and process the applications, and issue the licenses to align with current practices for similarly structured licenses.

- Ronald Watson suggested clarifying in the report that licensed tobacconists may not be located directly adjacent to specifically *licensed* childcare/child-related facilities in the recommendations.
  - Dana Moncrief highlighted that licensed child-related facilities would exclude playgrounds. Cliff Mitchell added that specifying licensed childcare/child-related facilities usually serves to differentiate between temporary and permanent facilities.
  - Ronald Watson was amenable to removing this specification.
- The Workgroup discussed the written suggestions Clarence Lam shared in advance of the meeting, which include:
  - Adding that some of the states that allow alcohol and smoking only allow this for businesses that were open by a certain date (e.g., CO, CT, MI).
  - Including that counties may have more protective clean indoor air laws.
  - Requiring that tobacco retail establishments that permit smoking prohibit entry for individuals under the age of 21.
  - Specifying that only products sold by the retailer can be smoked on-site. The smoking of cigarettes may not be permitted.
- Finnie Helmuth raised concerns related to minors who may accompany adults while they purchase a cigar for off-site consumption.
- Workgroup members highlighted that this should be at the discretion of the business owner since it does not involve the on-site consumption of alcohol.
- Workgroup members clarified for the Workgroup that counties currently have the statutory authority to adopt more stringent clean indoor air act laws.
- Nilesh Kalyanaraman discussed the next steps for the adoption of the report.

### **Public Comment**

- Nilesh Kalyanaraman opened the public comment period.
- Scott Tiffin, Chief of Staff for Senator Clarence Lam's office, provided further clarification on his written comments.
- Lance Kilpatrick, Government Relations Director of the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, highlighted how the funding constraints for tobacco cessation and prevention programs were cut to the statutory minimum during the 2025 legislative session. He suggests that any proceeds resulting from these recommendations should be used to fund these programs.
- Glynne Loope with the Premium Cigar Association in Washington offered corrections on the background section of the report.
- Nilesh Kalyanaraman closed the public comment period.

### **Closing Remarks**

- The Workgroup voted to adjourn the meeting.
- Nilesh Kalyanaraman thanked the Workgroup for their participation.