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April 21, 2026

The Honorable Melissa Minor-Brown
411 Legislative Ave
Dover, DE 19901

RE: DHA Supporting Comments for an Increase in Tobacco Tax (HS 1 for HB 215)

Dear Speaker Minor-Brown,

On behalf of Delaware's hospitals, health systems, and related healthcare organizations, thank you for the opportunity to express the Delaware Healthcare Association's (DHA) support for House Substitute 1 for House Bill 215. This legislation increases the cigarette tax by \$1.50 per pack and raises taxes on other tobacco products to 40% of the wholesale price.

Tobacco use remains the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, killing an estimated 490,000 Americans and 1,440 Delawareans each year. It also drives more than \$618 million in annual healthcare costs in Delaware, including \$102.8 million in Medicaid spending. Hospitals and health systems see firsthand the impact of tobacco-related illnesses, including cancer, heart disease, and respiratory conditions. Increasing the price of tobacco products is an effective strategy to encourage cessation, prevent use (particularly among youth), and reduce avoidable healthcare utilization and costs.

Thank you for the opportunity to share DHA's support for HS 1 for HB 215. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues in the General Assembly to advance this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Christina Bryan'.

Christina Bryan
Vice President of External Affairs