

July 21, 2010

Dr. Gregory Branch  
Baltimore County Department of Health  
6401 York Rd, 3rd Floor  
Baltimore, MD 21212-2130

Re: Tobacco advertising

Dear Dr. Branch,

I am sure that you agree that the use of tobacco remains one of the most pressing health issues facing us. Although some try to deny it, continued public advertising of tobacco products is part of the problem, since it counteracts attempts to educate people, including children, that such use is not acceptable. The prevalence of advertising in our everyday lives adds to the perception that it is a normal, acceptable practice.

Since billboard advertising was eliminated in 1999 by the Tobacco Master Settlement Agreement, there has been a huge increase in all other forms of public advertising, both indoors and outdoors. As you are well aware, almost every gas station and liquor store has one of more signs around their building, such as the ones pictured below.

I suggest that you push an effort to get these advertising signs removed from alongside our roadways. Such a push is not targeting tobacco advertising, thus is not an unfair, discriminatory prohibition of one particular product. In fact, most of these signs, as pictured, are a violation of Section 450 of the Baltimore County Zoning Code, no matter what product they are advertising.

I would appreciate the opportunity to discuss this with you or a member of your staff, since I believe it could be a significant part of the overall campaign to reduce smoking, not to mention cleaning up our roadways of this visual clutter. (See July 17 Baltimore Sun article about my efforts.)

Thanks for any assistance that you can provide.

Regards,

Michael A Pierce  
7448 Bradshaw Rd  
Kingsville, MD 21087  
410 817-4795

