



Impact of Menthol on Tobacco Disparity Populations

According to the Centers for Disease and Control and Prevention (CDC), many populations that experience tobacco disparities also use menthol at higher rates than the national average.¹ Tobacco use causes cancer, heart disease, stroke, lung diseases, diabetes, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), an additional health burden these communities can ill afford.

Populations that experience tobacco disparities are youth as well as adult African Americans, Latinxs, Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders, Native Americans/Alaska Natives, LGBTQ people, people from non-urban areas, people with lower socio-economic status, as well as those with behavioral health conditions (mental health/addiction).

Access to menthol in cigarettes, e-cigarettes, and other tobacco products continues to disproportionately result in harm to these populations. Studies show use of menthol tobacco products facilitates smoking initiation among youth and is correlated with reduced cessation rates. Research shows a menthol ban can increase cessation rates; conversely, when menthol is exempted from flavor bans, tobacco users simply shift to menthol products.

To help end tobacco disparities and minimize tobacco-related addiction, access to all tobacco flavorings should be eliminated. Allowing access to menthol actively hurts populations already experiencing tobacco disparities and sets the stage to perpetuate these inequities for another generation.

National African American Tobacco Prevention Network
National LGBT Cancer Network
SelfMade Health Network
Asian Pacific Partners for Empowerment, Advocacy, and Leadership
National Alliance for Hispanic Health
Geographic Health Equity Alliance (CADCA)
National Behavioral Health Network for Tobacco and Cancer Control
National Native Network (Keep It Sacred)

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Networking for Health Equity is the alliance of eight CDC funded national health disparity networks focused on tobacco and cancer. For more information contact mscott@naatpn.org or scout@cancer-network.org.

¹ Menthol and Cigarettes. CDC. Retrieved November 6, 2019 from https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/basic_information/tobacco_industry/menthol-cigarettes/index.html