

## **CONTACT:**

**For question or to submit your letter of support:**

**Please email [NorthlandMN@Lung.org](mailto:NorthlandMN@Lung.org) along with your name, title, address, phone.**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**To:** American Lung Association

**From:** \_\_\_\_\_

**RE: Support to Menthol & Flavorings Campaign**

While tobacco use has declined over the decades, it remains the leading cause of preventable death in the United States<sup>1</sup>. In Minnesota, tobacco use claims 5,900 lives each year<sup>2</sup> and is responsible for more than \$3.19 billion annually in health care costs<sup>3</sup>. The positive trends in tobacco use rates have unfortunately not been equally realized in communities of color<sup>4</sup>, the LGBTQ community<sup>5</sup>, or people with lower socioeconomic status<sup>6</sup>. Menthol and other flavored tobacco products are a significant contributor to these issues.

Menthol is the most commonly used flavoring in tobacco products<sup>7</sup>. Its pleasant minty taste and soothing cooling qualities mask the harshness of tobacco smoke and reduce the irritation associated with nicotine, all of which increases the palatability of smoking, especially among new young smokers<sup>8</sup>. Nearly half of all teen smokers use menthol tobacco products<sup>9</sup>, with approximately 90% of adult smokers having begun smoking before they were 18 years old<sup>10</sup>. The tobacco industry has falsely marketed menthol cigarettes as healthier and safer, when in fact they are just as deadly<sup>11</sup>. Menthol cigarettes, like all tobacco products, cause cancer, heart and lung disease, and death.

The tobacco industry has a long history of profiling communities of color, the LGBTQ community and the low income community by marketing menthol products to them<sup>12</sup>. It is no accident that 88% of African American smokers, 44% of those living below the poverty line, and 71% of young LGBTQ smokers use menthol, compared to 25% of smokers overall<sup>13</sup>. Nor is it a surprise that these communities are disproportionately impacted by death and disease caused as a result of tobacco use<sup>14</sup>.

The tobacco industry also has a long history of using fruit, candy, dessert, alcohol, and other flavors to market their products to youth and young adults<sup>15</sup>. Children frequent convenience stores five times more often than adults<sup>16</sup>. Once inside the store, the candy aisle is barely distinguishable from the tobacco display<sup>17</sup>. These practices are nothing short of a scourge to our community.

Many menthol smokers support the elimination of menthol cigarettes. Studies have found that nearly half of menthol smokers support prohibiting menthol in cigarettes or did not have a strong opinion for or against such a regulation<sup>18</sup>. In Minnesota, nearly half of menthol smokers

have also indicated that they would quit smoking if menthol cigarettes were no longer sold in the United States<sup>19</sup>.

Duluth has been a longtime leader in the tobacco control movement. We understand that our local policies have a positive impact on tobacco use and public health in our community. The policy being put forward to limit access to menthol and other flavored tobacco products is a common sense response that reflects our community's commitment to "health in all policies" to and advancing health equity<sup>20</sup>. Limiting access to menthol and other flavorings will help address the health disparities caused by the tobacco industry's retail marketing practices, help reduce youth initiation and use, and help those trying to quit to stay quit.

It is because of this threat to the health and well-being of our community and the costs associated with tobacco use that we, the undersigned, support current efforts to reduce access to menthol and other flavored tobacco products and **urge the Duluth City Council to restrict the sale of menthol and other flavored tobacco products to adult only tobacco stores in the city.**

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<sup>1</sup> CDC - Fact Sheet - Fast Facts - Smoking & Tobacco Use (2017) - [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/fast\\_facts/](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/fast_facts/)

<sup>2</sup> Statistic included in CDC's *Extinguishing the Tobacco Epidemic in Minnesota (2017)* <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/about/osh/program-funding/pdfs/minnesota-508.pdf>

**Note** - MDH's Tobacco Control Website provides a higher number for tobacco-related deaths (6,300) - <http://www.health.state.mn.us/tobacco/>

<sup>3</sup> BCBS – 2017 Health Care Costs and Smoking in Minnesota: The Bottom Line - <http://www.centerforpreventionmn.com/-/media/sites/cfp/files/reports/cost-of-smoking-report-2017>

<sup>4</sup> CDC – Tobacco-Related Disparities - <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/index.htm>

<sup>5</sup> CDC - Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Persons and Tobacco Use - <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/lgbt/index.htm>

<sup>6</sup> CDC - Cigarette Smoking and Tobacco Use Among People of Low Socioeconomic Status - <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/disparities/low-ses/index.htm>

<sup>7</sup> Annette Regan et al., *Smokeless and Flavored Tobacco Products in the U.S.: 2009 Styles Survey Results*, 42 AM. J. PREVENTIVE MED. 29036 (2012). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/22176843>

<sup>8</sup> CASAColumbia, *Time to Ban Menthol 6–7* (2014), <http://www.casacolumbia.org/addiction-research/reports/time-to-ban-menthol-report-2014>.

<sup>9</sup> CASAColumbia, *Time to Ban Menthol 6–7* (2014), <http://www.casacolumbia.org/addiction-research/reports/time-to-ban-menthol-report-2014>.

<sup>10</sup> CDC – Youth and Smoking - [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/youth\\_data/tobacco\\_use/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/youth_data/tobacco_use/index.htm)

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<sup>11</sup> CDC - Tobacco-Related Mortality -

[https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/health\\_effects/tobacco\\_related\\_mortality/](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/health_effects/tobacco_related_mortality/)

<sup>12</sup> CounterTobacco.org – Disparities in Point-of-Sale Advertising and Retailer Density -

<http://countertobacco.org/resources-tools/evidence-summaries/disparities-in-point-of-sale-advertising-and-retailer-density/>

<sup>13</sup> Giovino GA, Villanti AC, Mowery PD et al. Differential Trends in Cigarette Smoking in the USA: Is Menthol Slowing Progress? *Tobacco Control*, doi:10.1136/tobaccocontrol-2013-051159, August 30, 2013 -

<https://www.fairwarning.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Giovino-et-al-Menthol-Trends-TobaccoControl-2013-051159-1.pdf>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration, Office of Applied Studies, The NSDUH Report: Use of Menthol Cigarettes (2009) - <http://store.samhsa.gov/product/Use-of-Menthol-Cigarettes/NSDUH09-1119>

National Youth Advocacy Coalition, *Coming Out About Smoking: A Report from the National LGBTQ Young Adult Tobacco Project* (2010), [http://lgbttobacco.org/files/Coming\\_Out\\_About\\_Smoking\\_NYAC.pdf](http://lgbttobacco.org/files/Coming_Out_About_Smoking_NYAC.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> University of California San Francisco, Smoking Cessation Leadership Center – Other Vulnerable Populations -

<https://smokingcessationleadership.ucsf.edu/other-vulnerable-populations>

<sup>15</sup> Memorandum from J.L Gemma, Marketing Development Department, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., to the Marketing Development Department Committee, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. (Aug. 16, 1985), available at <http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/tid/xgm15d00/pdf>.

Memorandum from Marketing Innovations, Inc. to Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp. (Sept. 1972), available at <http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/tid/wwq54a99/pdf>.

Memorandum from A.P. Ritchy, Product Group, R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co., to P.R. Ray, Jr., R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. (Dec. 18 1972), available at <http://legacy.library.ucsf.edu/tid/buq49d00/pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Sanders-Jackson, A., Parikh, N. M., Schleicher, N. C., Fortmann, S. P., & Henriksen, L. (2015). Convenience store visits by US adolescents: Rationale for healthier retail environments. *Health & Place*, 34, 63–66.

<http://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2015.03.011> - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4497830/>

<sup>17</sup> Pictures CounterTobacco.org – Media Gallery - <http://countertobacco.org/media-gallery/store-image-maps/>

<sup>18</sup> Jennifer L. Pearson et al., A Ban on Menthol Cigarettes: Impact on Public Opinion and Smokers' Intention to Quit, 102(11) AM. J. OF PUB. HEALTH e107, e108 (2012) - <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3474368/>

<sup>19</sup> Minnesota Adult Tobacco Survey - <http://www.mnadulttobaccosurvey.org/>

<sup>20</sup> City of Duluth File #: 17-0301R Resolution Adopting Governing Principals for the Comprehensive Plan, 4/24/17.