



Advancing Health Equity by Eliminating Flavored Tobacco Products

Flavored tobacco products, especially menthol cigarettes, have long targeted Black communities and youth, contributing to significant health disparities. Decades of research show that menthol cigarettes are disproportionately used by Black smokers, leading to higher rates of tobacco-related illnesses and premature deaths.

Young people are particularly vulnerable: over 86% of youth in grades 6-12 have used flavored tobacco products, with flavors like mint, mango, and bubblegum making initiation easier and increasing addiction risks. Flavored e-cigarettes are inexpensive and widely accessible, further fueling youth tobacco use.

Industry efforts include misleading lobbying campaigns that associate menthol bans with increased criminalization. However, removing menthol and flavored tobacco products could save approximately 654,000 lives over the next 40 years, including around 255,000 Black lives.

Eliminating these products is vital for health equity by reducing targeted marketing, protecting vulnerable populations, and preventing tobacco-related disparities. During our National Convention in October 2024, NCNW passed a tobacco control resolution reaffirming our commitment to advocate for policies that restrict the sale of menthol and all flavored tobacco products, working toward healthier communities.