

Save Lives:

Ban Menthol Cigarettes

Mission: To ban “menthol” in all tobacco products.

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Dear Health Justice Advocates,

We are writing you today to strongly encourage your (organization, city, agency, etc.) to take a stand against menthol in tobacco products. As you know, menthol masks the harsh taste of tobacco and thus makes it easier for kids to start smoking and for adults to continue to smoke. I am sure that you are also aware of the predatory marketing of menthol cigarettes to the African American community, with greater advertising, bigger promotions and cheaper prices. The Food and Drug Administration’s Center for Tobacco Products (FDA CTP) has been dragging its feet on banning menthol. What makes this most troubling is that two major investigative studies performed at the behest of the FDA found that the removal of menthol from tobacco products would benefit the public’s health. Since the FDA CTP can’t or won’t deal with this issue, we are turning to you and your organization.

Attached are examples of major organizations and municipalities that have taken up the fight to get menthol cigarettes off the market. First, attached is a letter from Rahm Emanuel, Mayor of Chicago, requesting the Chicago Board of Health to seek local policy options to curtail the use of menthol cigarettes among its youth. Since the writing of Mayor Emanuel’s letter, the Chicago Department of Public Health has written a Policy Brief on Menthol Cigarettes (see attached) and also has scheduled a series of Town Hall meetings to inform the community about the scourge of menthol.

The second example major development is that the Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., representing 240,000 women, passed a resolution at its recent national convention calling for the FDA to ban menthol cigarettes (resolution attached). The Deltas become the first and largest predominately African American Organization to come out on this issue.

These two actions show that if the FDA won’t act, then we still can. Whether at the local, regional or national level, we can begin to curb the spread of menthol products; we can begin to spread the word about the harms of menthol; and we can get our City or State / Agency or Organization to pass resolutions call for the ban of menthol products (sample resolution is attached). We are requesting that your organization, city or agency take action by doing the following:

- Take this letter to your local city council to raise awareness of the dangers of menthol;
- Call and/or write the FDA and submit your concerns about mentholated cigarettes on the FDA docket entitled [Menthol in Cigarettes, Tobacco Products; Request for Comments](#) by Friday, November 22, 2013; and
- Have your organization, agency, city or church pass a resolution that demands the FDA to ban menthol cigarettes.

For assistance on these actions, feel free to call me at 215-680-3790 or Dr. Phillip Gardiner at 510-504-9397. Let’s win the fight to ban menthol cigarettes for our youth and our communities as a whole.

Yours in saving lives,

Rev. Jesse Brown
215-680-3790

Dr. Phillip Gardiner
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