Protecting our Youth: Eliminate Flavored Tobacco

The Good News: Fewer teens are smoking traditional cigarettes than ever before.

In 1997 roughly 25% of TEENS USED CIGARETTES vs In 2019 roughly 5% of TEENS USED CIGARETTES

The Bad News: With the introduction of e-cigarettes, youth tobacco rates are skyrocketing once again.

1 in 4 HIGH SCHOOL AGE KIDS REPORTING TOBACCO USE

WHY eliminate the sale of ALL flavored tobacco products?

- more than 8 in 10 youth who have ever used tobacco products started with flavored products
- Nearly all (97%) of youth e-cigarette users report using flavored products, while most report that flavored products are a key reason for their use
- All tobacco products contain nicotine, which is particularly harmful to the adolescent/developing brain (a disposable device/pod has as much nicotine as a pack of cigarettes)

PRODUCTS COME IN MORE THAN 15,000 DIFFERENT FLAVORS like apple, cherry, grape, chocolate, menthol, mint, peach, bubble gum, cotton-candy and vanilla.

Current youth tobacco users report using flavored products:

- 68% flavored e-cigarettes
- 48% smokeless flavored products
- 47% menthol cigarettes
- 42% flavored cigars
- 31% flavored smoke pipe tobacco
- 31% flavored hookah
Demographics of tobacco users in middle and high school who use flavored products:

- **72%** High School Students
- **59%** Middle School Students

- **76%** White Students
- **63%** Hispanic Students
- **48%** Black Students

Menthol makes cigarettes easier to smoke and harder to quit. Nearly 65% of young menthol smokers say they would quit if menthol cigarettes were banned.

Health disparities continue to increase in communities of color and low-income neighborhoods where menthol cigarettes are marketed extensively.

WHAT can be done?

Cities, counties, and states across the United States are eliminating the sale of ALL flavored tobacco products to protect our youth from a lifetime of nicotine addiction.

The American Heart Association urges local, state, and federal action to adopt policies that:

- **Cover ALL tobacco products**
- **Include ALL characterizing flavors, including mint and menthol**
- **Focus enforcement and penalties on tobacco retailers.**
- **Require tobacco retail licenses** to ensure compliance with sales age and flavor laws.

Menthol cigarette use among current smokers (aged 12+) in the U.S. by race/ethnicity:

- White 28.9%
- Asian 38%
- Hispanic 46.9%
- Black 84.6%