


The Center for Black Health & Equity
Faith-based Initiatives
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www.centerforblackhealth.org

## Introduction

# FOCUS ON VICTORY, GO AGAINST THE GRAIN.

The Center for Black Health & Equity's No Menthol Sunday is our annual opportunity for faith communities to address the detrimental impact tobacco has on Black communities. Each year we encourage faith leaders to dedicate this day to educating congregants about smoking, vaping and the role of menthol and other flavors. The pandemic has increased the risk of smoking-related deaths in our communities, but there is so much we can do to focus on victory! This is our time to go against the grain and reject the tobacco industry's tactics.

This year's theme, "Focus on Victory, Go Against the Grain" encourages us to stand up against the tobacco industry and create healthy and just tobacco-free communities.

It's been two years since the Food & Drug Administration announced the rule-making process to prohibit the sale of tobacco products with any characterizing flavors, like menthol. That is a historic win! As the FDA continues its process, we must continue to uplift one another and advocate for a healthier future.

Just as it was written in Psalm 91:14, "Because he has focused his love on me, I will deliver him."

No Menthol Sunday is also an excellent time for people who smoke to begin a new quit journey. Faith communities can commit to creating comfortable, safe spaces for those who struggle with nicotine addiction. Genuine support and an open ear for transparent conversations are very important. Today, we invite tobacco users to seek the necessary resources they need to be successful.

No Menthol Sunday serves to raise our consciousness about important issues in Black health. When people of faith remain vigilant, educate youth, and inspire community action, we will begin to move toward total health justice. It's time to lead the way toward a tobacco-free world.



# MENTHOL FACTS

**Menthol is a minty flavor that makes it easier to start smoking and harder to quit.**

- Most Black people who smoke use menthols (85%).
- Most minorities who smoke use menthols.
- Most kids who start smoking try menthols first.
- Smoking is still the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S.

**The menthol issue is a social justice issue.**

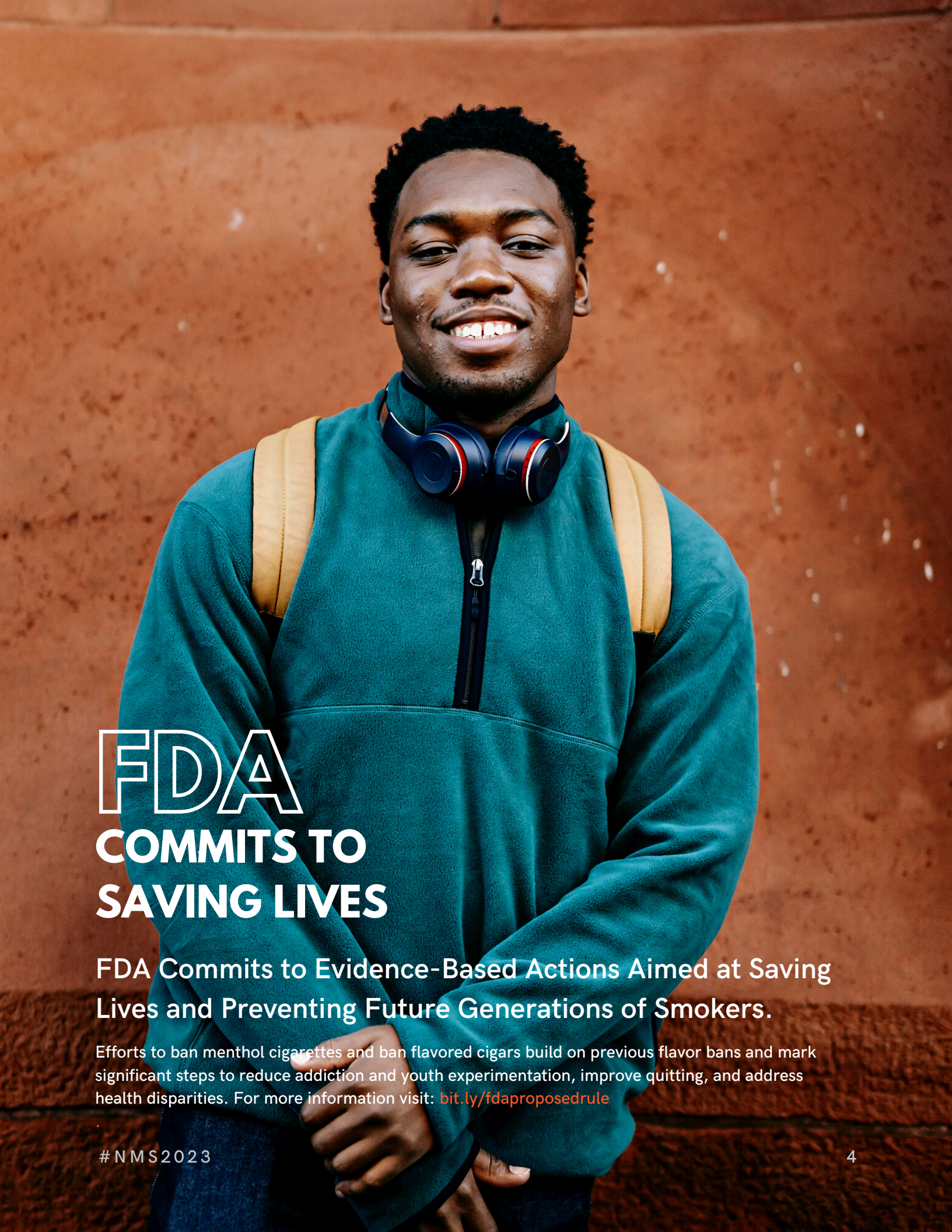
- The tobacco industry intentionally tries to get Black people to buy mentholated tobacco products, offering discounts and placing more (and larger) advertisements for menthols in Black communities.
- The tobacco industry gives money to Black political leaders, HBCUs, festivals, Black-owned newspapers and other prominent civil rights organizations.
- Improving health outcomes for Black people will require leaders to tear down the racial and social systems that have kept the tobacco industry in charge.

**The FDA has the power to ban menthol from tobacco products, and proposed a rule in April 2022 "prohibiting menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars to prevent youth initiation, significantly reduce tobacco-related disease and death."**

- A menthol ban on cigarettes would help reduce addiction and youth experimentation.
- A menthol ban will help smokers quit and improve quit attempts.
- A menthol ban will help address tobacco-related health disparities.

**The tobacco industry pays Black leaders to say that a ban on menthol would criminalize Black people, but this is not true.**

- The FDA's menthol ban would prohibit people from manufacturing, distributing, and selling menthols, NOT possessing them.



# FDA COMMITS TO SAVING LIVES

## FDA Commits to Evidence-Based Actions Aimed at Saving Lives and Preventing Future Generations of Smokers.

Efforts to ban menthol cigarettes and ban flavored cigars build on previous flavor bans and mark significant steps to reduce addiction and youth experimentation, improve quitting, and address health disparities. For more information visit: bit.ly/fdaproposedrule

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## LOCAL & STATEWIDE PARTICIPATION

# LEAD THE WAY

No Menthol Sunday is a unique way to engage your area coalitions and health departments in tobacco control efforts. While the FDA has committed to a flavor and menthol ban, local and state action is still needed. Implementation of this kind of policy could take years to realize.

**IN 2022, THE FDA PROPOSED A RULE TO BAN MENTHOL.**
**NOW IS THE TIME FOR STATE AND LOCAL JURISDICTIONS TO MAKE A MOVE.**

No Menthol Sunday is an excellent opportunity to build a faith-based network and get to know key leaders and influencers within your state's Black communities. There are many ways to promote No Menthol Sunday and use the activities on this day of observance to build awareness about important tobacco-related community initiatives. It is also possible to use No Menthol Sunday to create buy-in for a new policy or reinforce an existing one. Our goal is to see participation in all 50 states.

On the NoMentholSunday.org website, register your event and enter your full, physical address.

### WAYS TO PARTICIPATE:

- Build your network of faith-based organizations to educate communities about the importance of tobacco-free policies and flavor bans that include menthol.
- Offer free nicotine replacement therapy during the week of No Menthol Sunday.
- Promote your state's 1-800-QUIT-NOW quitline and take note of calls during No Menthol Sunday.
- Develop a plan to introduce a comprehensive flavor ban within your city, state or county.

*Contact Greg Bolden at gbolden@centerforblackhealth.org for information about how The Center for Black Health & Equity can support your efforts.*

# OUR POSITION ON MENTHOL

Tobacco-related illness is still the primary cause of death for Black people. Menthol makes smoking easier to start and harder to quit. This is no exception for Black people who consistently report more attempts to quit than the general smoking population, yet experience lower success rates. Because more than 85% of Black smokers prefer menthols (as compared to 30% of Caucasian smokers), particular attention should be given to the elimination of mentholated tobacco products.

The tobacco industry has executed a calculated, menthol-centered strategy to establish a strong presence in Black communities, appropriate Black culture, and create a dependency on tobacco funding. As such, the predominant use of menthols among Black smokers is well-documented among public health authorities.

Unfortunately, we have observed the way tobacco advocates have also negotiated to exclude menthol. In the pursuit of their own initiatives banning candy-flavored tobacco, the harm menthol flavoring inflicts on our communities is ignored. The Center for Black Health & Equity considers this to be counterproductive and an affront to the integrity of public health efforts. Further, we consider this to be reflective of historical racism.

Black populations have been disregarded as casualties of corporate profits and tobacco policy wins. In order to address this social justice issue, The Center for Black Health & Equity is committed to 1) challenging the tobacco industry's infiltration into Black communities 2) promoting innovative, culturally competent cessation programs, and 3) educating community decision makers on effective strategies for enacting comprehensive tobacco-free policies.

Most importantly, the issue of menthol must be viewed through the lens of racial equality and addressed through the work of restorative justice. Visit bit.ly/ourpostiononmenthol to read the full statement.

THE CENTER FOR
BLACK HEALTH & EQUITY



Because
he has focused
his love
on me,

I will
deliver
him.

- Psalm 91:14

#NMS2023

# MENTHOL BAN:
## REBUTTALS TO KEY ARGUMENTS & DEBUNKING MYTHS

### I know many white people who smoke menthols. Why is this a racial issue?

For decades the tobacco industry specifically marketed menthols to Black communities. The industry appropriated elements of Black culture and heavily invested advertising dollars into Black publications. They are known for sponsoring Black events like the KOOL Jazz festival, saturating urban Black neighborhood stores with ads, and pricing menthols more cheaply in Black neighborhoods. As a result of their efforts, 85% of Black people who smoke choose menthols while less than 30% of white people who smoke prefer menthols.



### Isn't tobacco use an issue of personal responsibility?

The tobacco industry used to distribute free samples of their deadly products to underage youth, handing them out from mobile units in Black neighborhoods like an ice cream truck. To this day, tobacco companies donate millions of dollars to institutions that are supposed to provide credible, unbiased information to help citizens make good decisions. These include historically Black colleges and universities, Black newspapers, civic leaders, researchers and even elected officials.

Research shows that quitting menthols is more difficult than quitting tobacco without this characterizing flavor. Black people consistently report more, but less successful, attempts at quitting menthols — making tobacco use not as personal of a choice as many assume.

# MENTHOL BAN:

## REBUTTALS TO KEY ARGUMENTS & DEBUNKING MYTHS

### Won't a ban on menthol increase the potential for unjustly criminalizing Black people?

This is a tobacco industry argument that exploits the real issues of police brutality and mass incarceration. Excessive force and systemic racism, including PUP (purchase use possession) laws that target youth 18 and under, are problems that must be addressed *independently* of public health measures. The FDA ban on mentholated tobacco will be enforced on manufacturers, distributors and retailers of the product — and does not criminalize an individual's use or possession of them.

### Isn't it true that a ban on menthol will only create an illicit market?

Data from countries (including Canada) that have already banned menthol cigarettes, as well as data from the United States, show no likelihood of illicit trade of menthol cigarettes after they are prohibited. In fact, surveys show that a ban would encourage Black people to quit menthols rather than seek them from an illegal source.

### Is the FDA just trying to take away our personal freedom?

Like food, drugs, cleaning products and cosmetics, the FDA regulates products that pose a threat to the public's health or safety. They do not regulate personal choices.



# DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

UNIQUELY BUILD AWARENESS ON NO MENTHOL SUNDAY

## MAKE A PLEDGE

Whether for a day or a week, challenge your congregation to join the movement, and encourage them to not use tobacco in observance of No Menthol Sunday. Create a pledge of your own, and for others, to be held accountable in their fight against tobacco. Make a plan to follow up with each other's progress and provide support to those who need it.

## DELIVER SUPPORT FOR QUITTING

If your place of worship is conducting in-person events, include printed information such as palm cards with resources for quitting. Remember that volunteers may not have all the facts and stats on tobacco. They can always point community members to 1-800-QUIT-NOW. This number will connect callers with certified cessation counselors who can help them develop a personalized plan to quit smoking.

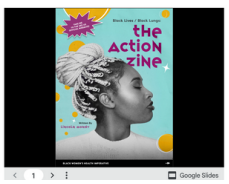
## HOST A SCREENING OF BLACK LIVES/ BLACK LUNGS

Grab some popcorn and gather friends around to view both installments of the Black Lives / Black Lungs documentary series. They are short films that investigate the tobacco industry's infiltration into the Black community. Created by filmmaker and activist Lincoln Mondy, the documentaries are as relevant as ever. After the screening, stick around and engage in some questions and conversation about what you learned.
lincolnmondy.com/black-lives-black-lungs




The Journey of a Stolen Leaf (2023)



# CAMPAIGNS WORTH SHARING

## WE ARE NOT PROFIT

It's time to end Big Tobacco's strategic killing of the Black community with menthol cigarettes. This campaign features facts about how the tobacco industry uses Black civic leaders to manipulate the Black community.

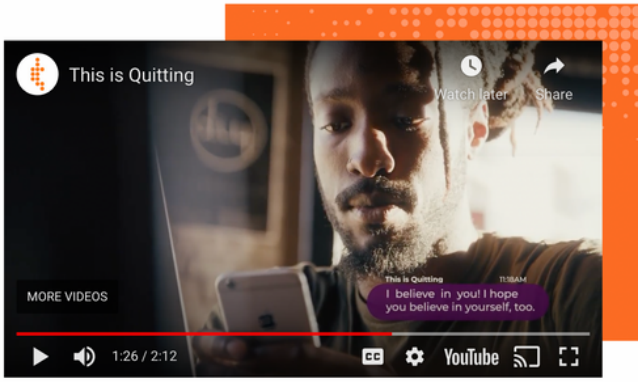
View




## THIS IS QUITTING

This is Quitting is a free and anonymous text messaging program from Truth Initiative designed to help young people quit vaping. All support is tailored according to age.

View




## MAKING MENTHOL BLACK

We can't change the fact that Big Tobacco spent nearly 50 years targeting Black communities, but we can still turn their damage around. This campaign highlights the cities across the U.S. that are starting to ban menthol. We have to keep the pressure mounting.

View



# CAMPAIGNS WORTH SHARING

## TIPS FROM FORMER SMOKERS

While most Americans understand that smoking cigarettes causes serious health effects, those who start smoking as youth or young adults may not realize smoking-related disease can happen relatively early in life. The 'Tips' campaign features compelling stories from former smokers and offers quit resources.

View



## IT'S NOT JUST

The campaign educates community leaders and the public about the dangers and social injustice of tobacco marketing. It engages local stakeholders to promote community changes that limit the tobacco industry's presence, de-normalize tobacco use and eliminate secondhand smoke.

View




## NMS POWERWALL

Tell us how you're making sure your community embraces new opportunities to live tobacco-free by posting on our digital power wall. Download your custom graphic to share on social media. Use the hashtag #NoMentholSunday!

View



# SERVICE MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT

Today is No Menthol Sunday, the time of year when we have real conversations about ending addiction and getting poison out of our communities. Did you know that smoking still kills more Black people each year than homicides, suicides, AIDS-related death, car accidents and police brutality combined? Yes, tobacco is still our number one killer. Most teens and Black people who smoke choose menthols because the minty flavor helps make it easier to start smoking. It also makes it harder to quit smoking. Civil rights and public health advocates have been fighting for a ban on menthol for years.

Psalm 91:14 says, "because he has focused his love on me, I will deliver him."

Family, that is exactly what we'll do -- pray for our health and come together to eliminate menthol from our communities for good. After decades of delay, the FDA has finally committed to banning menthols and flavored cigars! This ban will help reduce addiction, help people quit, and keep our young people from ever wanting to pick up that filthy habit.

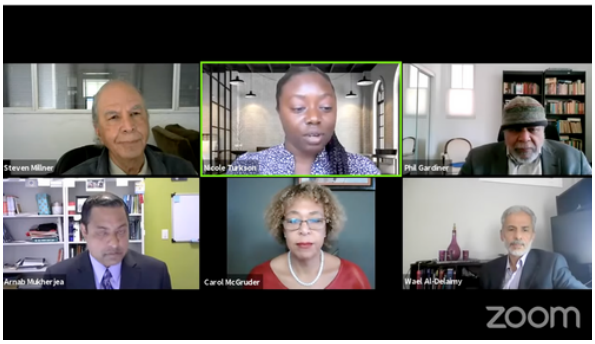
If you smoke but haven't talked to anyone about it, now is the time. We just want to pray with you, give you resources, and help you to find your way to freedom. We know it can take several tries before you quit for good. You can call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for free resources and coaching. Or feel free to contact me after today for more. Thank you.

# CONTENT WORTH SHARING

## HOOKAH & USING CULTURE TO CON US

In this timely webinar, *The Culture of Manipulation: How Tobacco Profiteers Use Culture to Con Us,* respected Middle Eastern and Black scholars deconstruct the common and nuanced history of the cultural targeting of their respective communities by new and old tobacco industries seeking corporate profits.

View




## COVID BIG QUIT

COVID-19 can hinder your health, even more so if you are a person who smokes. You don't have to quit alone. Here are steps you can take to start your quit journey, today!

View




## MAKE A MEDIA SPLASH

Use the press release template on NoMentholSunday.org to make your #NMS2023 a newsworthy event. Contact your local news stations and newspaper reporters and tell them why a menthol ban is critical to the health of your community. Don't forget to use social media to the fullest.

View



# SERMONS & PRESENTATIONS

## PAUL'S LETTER TO TIMOTHY

### NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

### Fight the Good Fight

It has long been known that the tobacco industry values profits over people. Money motivates the tobacco industry to aggressively lobby for laws that do more for their own pockets than for the well-being of citizens. Money is what keeps commercial tobacco on shelves even though its burden on families, the healthcare system, and the U.S. economy is well-documented. To be clear, the tobacco industry loves money.

You need look no further than the tobacco industry to understand why Paul warns young Timothy that the *love of money* is the source of *all kinds of evil* (I Timothy 6:10). In his letter to Timothy, Paul points out that some, in their thirst for money, have left their sense of goodness. He tells Timothy to run from such pursuits and to, instead, *fight the good fight of faith* (I Timothy 6:12).

In this same way, we must all actively oppose a "profits over people" culture, and fight faithfully for what is right. We are called to stand against evil and contend with forces of injustice. We will yet see what we have hoped for (Hebrew 11:1)! When that day comes, like Paul, we too will declare that we have kept the faith, we have finished the race, and we have fought the good fight.



# SERMONS & PRESENTATIONS

## FROM THE PROPHET HABAKKUK
### HEBREW BIBLE

### How Long, Lord?

Sometimes it seems that evil will always prevail. As we watch wrongdoers profit despite the death and disease that they cause, we can become discouraged. Like the prophet Habakkuk, we have all cried out, "How long, Lord? Why do you make me look at injustice?" (Hab1:3). We have wondered if we will have to watch the tobacco industry succeed forever. But the Lord responded to Habakkuk, declaring that the unjust will eventually be held guilty (v. 11). Even when justice seems to delay, we can wait patiently knowing that at the appointed time, our ultimate goal will not fail (Hab 2:3).



## FOR FOLLOWERS OF ISLAM
### IN CONSIDERATION OF SALATUL-JUMU'AH

### Our Body Has Rights Over Us

The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) is quoted as saying, "Your body has a right over you." This is a reminder to Muslims that treating one's body kindly and with deference, while maintaining good health is a part of Deen. In Salatul-Jumu'ah leading to No Menthol Sunday, discuss the obligation to observe one's health and care for our bodies. Remind congregants that good health is a gift from Allah.

Additionally, the Qur'an states that one should show kindness to our family, neighbors and others (4:36). Secondhand smoke poses dangers to oneself AND to others. For those who desire to quit smoking, invite them to start during Ramadhan.

# START A MOVEMENT
## RESOURCES & TEMPLATES

ALL CONTENT DOWNLOADABLE FROM
NOMENTHOLSUNDAY.ORG

### CHURCH FANS

Church fans commemorating No Menthol Sunday 2023 are available. They serve as both factsheets and cooling mechanisms. Visit NoMentholSunday.org to submit a purchase order.




### SOCIAL MEDIA COVER IMAGE

Help us promote the event by adding this image to your Facebook and Twitter profile. Use the hashtag #NoMentholSunday or #NMS2023. Visit NoMentholSunday.org to download.




### SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS

Remind congregants of the observance day by posting these graphics to your website and social media outlets. Use the hashtag #NoMentholSunday or #NMS2023. Visit NoMentholSunday.org to download.



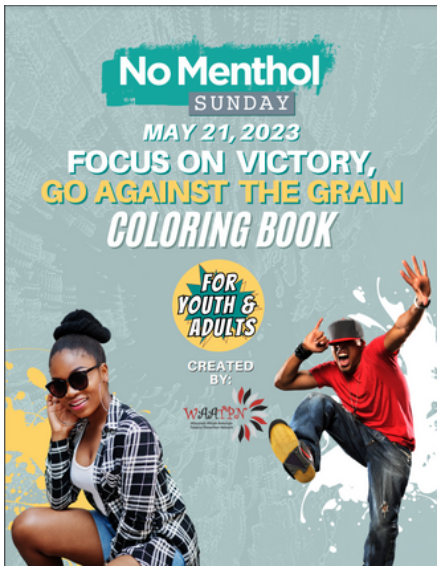
# START A MOVEMENT

## RESOURCES & TEMPLATES

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NOMENTHOLSUNDAY.ORG

### COLORING BOOK

Coloring can be fun for people of all ages. Spark a conversation about the dangers of tobacco, using this coloring book. Visit NoMentholSunday.org to download it now.




### YARD SIGNS

Take your low-cost outdoor advertising up a notch by using economical H-frame yard signs to promote the day. Be sure to check with your local ordinances before you pitch your signs. Get the design developed at your local printer. Visit NoMentholSunday.org for printable images.



## 8 TACTICS THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY USES TO

# KEEP US SICK

1. Predatory marketing in our communities

2. Discounted tobacco products in our communities

3. Misinformation and disinformation on the harm and benefit of tobacco use

4. Passing laws preventing the removal of tobacco products from our communities

5. Funding cultural events in our communities

6. Tobacco use in videos, games, and movies

7. Donations to elected officials, community, and church leaders in our communities

8. Purchase Use and Possession (PUP) laws to divert enforcement attention and resources away from the retailers who sell to underage persons and toward youth, many of whom may already be addicted

## Advocacy

# AFTER #NMS2023

- Get involved by spreading the word about the harms of menthol. This may be through social media or by continuing to provide our tools and information at your services.

- Build relationships with local officials who are interested in supporting the health of marginalized communities. Ask them to support measures that are proven to reduce tobacco use such as restricting the sale of mentholated tobacco products within 500 feet of a school.

- Support congregants who want to quit tobacco with prayer and patience. Help members to reduce stress and find ways to join in on efforts to be healthier. Encourage tobacco users to call 1-800-Quit-Now. They can talk to a Quit Line coach who can help develop a plan for quitting.

- Talk to youth about nicotine addiction and the importance of not smoking or vaping.

- If you have any additional questions or would like to start a community-wide movement, visit centerforblackhealth.org.

- Join The Center for Black Health & Equity's mailing list and follow us on Instagram, Facebook & Twitter.



# CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION

## STATE OF BLACK HEALTH

While No Menthol Sunday is heavily focused on tobacco's impact on Black health, The Center for Black Health & Equity knows other factors hurt us too. Join us at the State of Black Health Conference, where hundreds of community leaders and equity advocates, from every background, assembles to find solutions to the social and economic injustices that have marginalized our communities and led to deep health disparities. Your voice, ideas, and compassion are needed here.



The conference focuses on three tracks:

### INSTITUTIONAL INJUSTICES

Addresses how injustices in our nation's judicial, educational, and federal institutions produce unhealthy communities and promote health inequality.

### ECONOMIC BARRIERS

Explores how unemployment and the attainment of livable wages contribute to current health disparities and remains a primary concern in Black communities.

### WELLNESS AND CHRONIC DISEASE

Reviews corporate, community, healthcare, and governmental public health efforts that are moving the needs toward reducing HIV, COVID-19, cancer or other disease disparities.

Registration and other details on StateofBlackHealth.com



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