Media Alert

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 29, 2021
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It’s Time for the Tobacco Industry to Stop Blowing Smoke: A Menthol Ban is Long Overdue!

Statement by: Colorado Black Health Collaborative

As Dr. Martin Luther King said, “the time is always right to do what is right.” This statement rings so true today as the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has finally done the right thing by releasing a plan to bar the sale of menthol as a characterizing flavor in cigarettes and ban all characterizing flavors including menthol in cigars. Colorado Black Health Collaborative (CBHC) acknowledges that this is an excellent first step and we are optimistic that the timeline will move quickly because lives are at stake.

For decades the tobacco industry has been blowing smoke about tobacco and the Black community. The intentional marketing of menthol cigarettes is yet another blatant example of racism that has permeated American society. Previously, when opportunities arose to right this wrong, exceptions were made, and profits were chosen over Black lives. Finally, it is time for justice. Time to put an end to these age-old practices and prejudices. African Americans deserve a chance to be healthy. If Menthol cigarettes were banned the majority of Black smokers would quit.

The tobacco industry has peddled these poisons in our neighborhoods, our cultural magazines, and our premier events for decades. The industry has enlisted the support of some of our trusted leaders to preach about African Americans being free to smoke any brand they want while purposefully peddling these mentholated products in our community for profit. This industry has spent billions of dollars targeting Black people with tactics to attract and addict our loved ones. The tobacco industry has known for decades that menthol cigarettes are even more deadly than traditional cigarettes. The cooling effect of menthol allows new smokers to tolerate them better. Menthol allows for a deeper inhalation and dependency. Evidence shows that it is more difficult to quit using menthol products.

This is a great day! The Colorado Black Health Collaborative is hosting a webinar tonight to continue educating the community about this important issue. A ban on menthol will pay dividends to the future of Black Americans. We need to seize this moment and keep marching forward. We know that the elimination of menthol cigarettes won’t happen overnight and will require the continued concerted effort of CBHC and others. As Colorado Black Health Collaborative likes to say, we must continue the fight, Just for the Health of it!

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