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San Francisco Moves to End Sale of Flavored Tobacco Products *Measure Includes Menthol Cigarettes, Candy-Flavored E-Cigarettes*

San Francisco, CA – June 14, 2017. A new and growing coalition of health organizations and community groups is commending the Public Safety and Neighborhood Services Committee of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors today for its public health leadership. The committee approved a policy that would eliminate the sale of flavored tobacco products, including menthol-flavored cigarettes, in all areas of the city and county. The legislation now moves to the full Board of Supervisors for consideration.

The *No More Flavored Tobacco* coalition includes the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN), the American Heart Association (AHA), American Lung Association, African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council, Campaign for Tobacco-free Kids Action Fund and Breathe California. The group has launched an educational [website](#) to inform the Bay Area about what's at stake if flavored tobacco products aren't reined in. Featured on the website is the [report](#) "*The Flavor Trap: How Tobacco Companies Are Luring Kids with Candy-Flavored E-Cigarettes and Cigars*" that details the dangers of flavored tobacco and how it is being marketed to hook the next generation to a potential lifetime nicotine addiction.

The tobacco industry has aggressively marketed menthol-flavored tobacco products to African Americans, often targeting youth. African American men have the highest rate of death from lung cancer when compared to other demographic groups.

"I see firsthand how our young people are marketed to, and it is no accident that 95 percent of African-American youth smokers report using menthol-flavored cigarettes. I also see the impacts of tobacco use in my clinical work and far too many of my patients have smoking-related illnesses," said Alden McDonald III, MD, Oakland resident, practicing cardiologist, and President of the Board for the Greater Bay Area Division of the American Heart Association.

The anesthetizing effect of menthol makes the smoke easier to inhale and masks the harsh taste of tobacco, making it more appealing to new users. A report by the Food and Drug Administration found that those who begin smoking menthol cigarettes are more likely to progress to a regular smoking habit and have a higher level of nicotine dependence than those who begin with non-menthol cigarettes.

"This is not only an issue of lung health, but also of social justice," said Dr. Tanya Stevenson, President and CEO of Breathe California. "Menthol cigarette users, especially younger smokers and people of color, have a harder time quitting. Youth menthol cigarette smokers are disproportionately African American, Asian American, LGBT, and from low-income communities already significantly impacted by lung disease."

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease and death in the United States, claiming more than 480,000 lives every year. Flavored tobacco products, including menthol, are widely considered "starter" products that appeal to youth.



“Tobacco companies are using menthol cigarettes and other flavored products, especially candy-themed e-cigarette liquids, to target youth and get the next generation of customers hooked on their deadly products,” said Vanessa Marvin, Vice President, Public Policy and Advocacy for the American Lung Association in California. “Putting an end to the sale of menthol and other flavored tobacco products and e-cigarettes will reduce teen use and ultimately save lives.”

Although use of cigarettes is declining in the U.S., sale of flavored tobacco products and menthol cigarettes continue to increase steadily in recent years, especially among young people and new smokers.

“The actions of the committee today puts the health of local citizens first,” said ACS CAN California’s Grassroots Director Lori Bremner whose father died from tobacco-related disease. The mother of three sons testified at the Board meeting, saying, “Tobacco use is responsible for one-third of cancer deaths in this country. We should be doing everything we can to protect young people from a deadly tobacco addiction as well as support those who are trying to quit.”

“We are seeing a tremendous tobacco industry pushback against efforts to protect our communities and that means that what we are doing is working,” said, Carol McGruder, Co-Chair of the African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council.

Learn more at www.nomoreflavoredtobacco.org.

About American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network

The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network is the nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy affiliate of the American Cancer Society. ACS CAN supports evidence-based policy and legislative solutions designed to eliminate cancer as a major health problem. ACS CAN works to encourage elected officials and candidates to make cancer a top national priority. ACS CAN gives ordinary people extraordinary power to fight cancer with the training and tools they need to make their voices heard. For more information, visit <http://www.acscan.org/>.

About American Heart Association and American Stroke Association

The American Heart Association and the American Stroke Association are devoted to saving people from heart disease and stroke – the two leading causes of death in the world. We team with millions of volunteers to fund innovative research, fight for stronger public health policies, and provide lifesaving tools and information to prevent and treat these diseases. The American Heart Association is the nation’s oldest and largest voluntary organization dedicated to fighting heart disease and stroke. The American Stroke Association is a division of the American Heart Association. To learn more or to get involved, call 1-800-AHA-USA1, visit heart.org or call any of our offices around the country. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

About the American Lung Association in California

The American Lung Association in California is the leading organization working to save lives by improving lung health and preventing lung disease through research, education and advocacy. The Lung Association is focused on four strategic imperatives: to defeat lung cancer, to improve the air we breathe, to reduce the burden of lung disease on individuals and their families, and to eliminate tobacco use and tobacco-related diseases. For more information about the American Lung Association in California or to support the work it does, call 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-685-4872) or visit www.lung.org/california



About the Tobacco-Free Kids Action Fund

The mission of the Tobacco-Free Kids Action Fund is to improve health and save lives by reducing tobacco use, the number one cause of preventable death in the United States and around the world. We mount education, advocacy and electoral campaigns in support of public policies that prevent kids from smoking, help smokers quit and protect everyone from secondhand smoke.

About Breathe California

Through grassroots education, advocacy and services, Breathe California fights lung disease, advocates for clean air and advances public health in our local communities. Since 1908, we have addressed the most serious health threats of our time through grassroots programs that empower individual, institutional and community change for better breathing and healthier living. Local offices in San Francisco, San Jose, Los Angeles, Monterey, and Sacramento. Visit us: www.breathecalifornia.org

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