

Big Quit: How Menthol and Nicotine Affect the Black and Brown Community in Buffalo, NY.

In Buffalo, New York, like many metropolitan areas, there are stores and bodegas on every corner with large advertisements outside, inside, and near our schools. These advertisements vary from candy to sugar sweetened beverages, but the most visible and consistent of them all are tobacco products such as cigarettes, vaping and menthol products.

Menthol has been a silent killer in black communities for decades. Black people are disproportionately more likely to smoke menthol than other brands due to targeted marketing and the abundance of menthol tobacco ads where they live, work and play. As a result, tobacco use is the number one cause of preventable death among Black Americans, claiming 45,000 Black lives every year, according to a 2021 Tobacco Free Kids report. In addition, tobacco companies target the younger generation with flavorful options of vaping. Their brains are still developing and this type of behavior can have a long term impact on their health.

Big tobacco companies thrive off the communities' lack of knowledge of the harmful effects of tobacco-related illnesses, like heart disease, cancer, and stroke. During the midst of the health pandemic, it was made apparent by the Center for Disease Control that stress and poverty are major drivers of tobacco use and that smoking tobacco continues to be a major health problem, especially in the African American community. According to the Center for Disease Control, smoking tobacco increases the risk of chronic diseases (heart disease, diabetes, stroke, cancer) and lung disease.

Join us in fighting back against the tobacco industry today and take the No Menthol Sunday Pledge. This pledge is dedicated to educating the faith-based community and community members on "Big Tobacco" marketing tactics, vaping, and the role of flavors like menthol on Black and Brown communities in the City of Buffalo. Efforts also include the promotion and accessibility of tobacco cessation supportive services.

To join and learn more information about our work, please contact Rashawn Smalls, Program Manager, Community Engagement TFCEN via email: rsmalls@caiglobal.org and visit our website: www.caiglobal.org/reach.



Asim Johnson, Healthcare Advocate

Healthcare Education Project