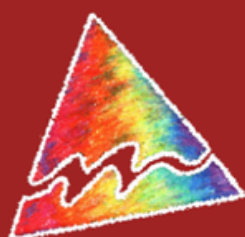


2024



TOBACCO CONTROL

To Support a Media Campaign to educate BIPOC communities about the proposed statewide tobacco flavor ban, and work with area sports teams to find out what people/youth know and feel about flavored tobacco products. Focus groups and media message testing will be done to determine what the cultural communities' needs and what messages related to flavor bans would appeal to which cultural groups. We will focus on young athletes from pan-Asian and pan-African communities, and a media campaign featured the young athletes based on what the message testing reveals.



Asian Media Access

Preface

Project SUPPORT (**S**upporting **U**nder-served through **P**roduce **P**rescription, and **O**pportunities to **R**ecreation-activity & **T**obacco-control), is led by Asian Media Access (AMA), collaborated with Multi Cultural Community Alliance (MCCA), Project SUPPORT is a cross-cultural, cross-generational, and cross-sectoral initiative, aims to improve health, prevent chronic disease, and reduce health disparities among Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOCs) who face the highest risk, and bear the highest burden of chronic disease, named: African American/Black, Asian American and has put a special focus on young people from the two poorest but most diverse neighborhoods in MN – North Minneapolis, and Midway St. Paul.

Supported by CDC's REACH funding, AMA has leveraged our extensive network of trusted community partners who provide subject matter expertise and have a history of successful engagement with the respective cultural and geographic communities. All partners have been involved in co-designing this Initiative – Project SUPPORT, through below 4 culturally tailored strategies to promote Bicultural Healthy Living, especially for immigrant and refugee communities:



1) Nutrition: Increase healthy cultural food access by implementing Food Service Guidelines (FSG) at area Asian Temples and Black Churches, and establishing Produce Rx at area clinics/hospitals.

2) Physical Activity: Increase policies, plans and community designs through North Minneapolis Blue Line and St. Paul Sears Redevelopment to better connect residents with activity friendly routes to everyday destination to live/learn/work/play, and provide safe, culturally based places for increasing physical activities.

3) Tobacco Control: Support a Media Campaign to educate BIPOC communities about the potential statewide tobacco flavor ban, and work with area sports teams to find out what people/youth know and feel about flavored tobacco products. Focus groups and media message testing will be done to determine what the community needs to know and what messages related to flavored tobacco would appeal to which cultural groups. We will focus on young athletes from pan-Asian and pan-African communities, and a media campaign featured the young athletes based on what the message testing reveals.

4) Vaccination for Adults: Increase education, demand for, and access to flu, COVID- 19, and other adult vaccinations via pop-up community clinics at the places that cultural groups feel comfortable and connected, and increase regularity of vaccine promotion in priority communities; and increase the percentage of pan- Asian and pan-African seniors who are up-to-date with recommended adult vaccinations.



Project SUPPORT

(Supporting Under-served through Produce/Park Prescription, and Opportunities to Recreation-activity & Tobacco-control)

Tobacco Control



Strategy includes focus groups to understand the level of knowledge and feeling towards flavored tobacco products, education on potential statewide bans, and tailored messages to appeal to specific cultural groups.

1 Policy Engagement: MN state-wide flavor ban policy

11 cultural partners and **23** sports meets to mobilize Pan African and Pan Asian community power to stop smoking

Conclusion

We collaborated with Pan African and Pan Asian sports teams to engage in the MN Smoke-Free Generation initiative and the Racial and Health Equity (RHE) committee, engaging effort on statewide flavor ban policy. Although the process unsuccessful during the 2024 state legislative session, we have inspired the cultural sports teams to lead community engagement process and develop policy mobilization messages in cultural and linguistic appropriate way.

Project SUPPORT is led by Asian Media Access, collaborated with Multi Cultural Community Alliance, for more information at 612-376-7715 • amamedia@amamedia.org

Stories of Partnership

01

Worked with Racial and Health Equity (RHE) committee to conduct 16 listening sessions with BIPOC leaders to include diverse perspectives, helping refine messaging on potential flavored tobacco ban policy. Findings focused on how to stop youth initiation of smoking, encourage cessation, reduce disparities in use of, and impact from, flavored commercial tobacco products, and address policy gaps like culturally competent cessation services and small business outreach.



02

The KaRen Football Association collected 360+ surveys during sports meets and KaRen Martyr's Day Festival to explore smoking's cultural relevance. Conversations revealed complex attitudes: 73% acknowledged smoking as culturally important, yet 76% did not believe it strengthened community bonds. Additionally, 89% recognized health risks from smoking and non-smoking tobacco products alike. Moving forward, a campaign focusing on these health risks could shift perspectives, challenging the idea that smoking is culturally acceptable while promoting statewide flavor tobacco ban.

03

TTL Foundation hosted 6 summer sports camps for Oromo and Somali refugee youth, focusing on team building, leadership development and advocacy skills. During the camps, participants learned about the dangers of flavored tobacco and the importance of supporting a statewide ban to protect their communities. The camps focused on building self-esteem and empowering the youth to educate their families and peers about the policy for flavor tobacco ban reaching hard-to-reached cultural communities.



04

The Vietnamese Community of MN hosted ongoing community events and educational sessions to raise awareness about the statewide flavor tobacco ban policy. They expanded their coalition by reaching out to other Asian American subgroups, including Asian Indian, Chinese, and Hmong communities, to strengthen their advocacy efforts. These collaborations helped broaden their impacts and create a unified voice in support of tobacco control policy.



Learn more at -
<https://ballequity.amamedia.org/project-support/>

Chapter 1

Background Information: Insights from the Landscaping Report

Data from the Asian Media Access' 1st year tobacco focus groups/surveys, and Minnesota Student Survey reveals significant disparities in substance use prevention and support among Black and Asian students compared to their peers.

These report disproportionately high rates of substance misuse, with limited access to culturally relevant prevention resources and support. These disparities underscore the importance of tailoring substance abuse prevention efforts to meet the unique needs of these communities. Including Black and Asian students in a comprehensive action plan is essential to address these inequities and create effective, culturally responsive strategies that reduce tobacco and substance abuse risks among Minnesota's diverse youth populations while following the CDC's Key Policy Strategies and Approaches:

- **Increase Comprehensive Smoke-Free Coverage:** Expand the reach of smoke-free laws to cover all communities, emphasizing spaces where vulnerable populations are disproportionately affected by secondhand smoke.
 - **Raise Tobacco Prices or Decrease Product Access:** Encourage higher taxation on tobacco products to reduce affordability, particularly among youth and low-income individuals, while also exploring zoning policies that limit retail density in communities heavily targeted by the tobacco industry.
 - **Reduce Targeted Advertising:** Restrict advertising and sponsorships targeting communities of color, youth, and other vulnerable groups to limit exposure to harmful tobacco industry messaging.
 - **Enhance Cessation Services:** Invest in culturally and linguistically accessible cessation resources, ensuring they are available to populations facing disparities, such as Black, Indigenous, and LGBTQIA+ communities, and located in regions with high tobacco use prevalence.
-

-
- **Restrict Retail Density through Place-Based Strategies:** Implement place-based policies to limit the density of tobacco retailers, especially in low-income and racially diverse neighborhoods disproportionately affected by tobacco use.

Additionally, our collaboration with the Minnesotans for a Smoke-Free Generation (MSFG) provided crucial insights and established a strong foundation for future tobacco control initiatives. MSFG's endorsement of a statewide flavor tobacco ban informed our approach, encouraging data collection and community engagement focused on the impacts of flavored tobacco products.

Through this collaboration, we gathered engagement data and community perspectives from our Multi Cultural Community Alliance' (MCCA) partners, underscoring broad support for restrictive policies on flavored tobacco. MCCA's support highlighted the importance of unified advocacy, setting the stage for coordinated, evidence-based campaigns in Year 2.

Chapter 2

Overall Policy Recommendations

Vision:

Integrate racial and health equity strategies into coalition activities, leadership, policy, and advocacy.

Goal:

Develop and implement comprehensive policies to address commercial tobacco-related disparities with a focus on racial and health equity.

Based on MSFG and AMA Landscape Report: Flavored Tobacco in Minnesota (Please refer to the Attachment), we have developed this statement of a Vision and Goal that we intend to follow for Year 2. In order to successfully accomplish these objectives, we have come up with a Policy Proposal with two Action Plan Focus Areas to advance our work.

Policy Proposal:

Ending Retail Sales of Menthol and Flavored Tobacco Products

A. Objective: Prohibit the sale of menthol and flavored tobacco products statewide to prevent youth initiation, encourage cessation, and reduce health disparities.

B. Expected Outcomes:

- **Youth Protection:** Reduce youth initiation of e-cigarettes and flavored tobacco products.
- **Comprehensive Support:** Not to create unintended consequences, ensuring the support for current users of menthol and flavored products in quitting.
- **Disparity Reduction:** Address disproportionate tobacco use among Black, African American, and LGBTQIA+ communities.

C. 2nd Year Action Plan's Focus:

1. Increase community engagement by highlighting the flavor tobacco harmful impacts on disproportionately affected groups. **(Community Engagement and Inclusion Effort)**
 2. Strengthen coalition impacts by collaboration with a state-wide network, increasing multilevel leadership and participation from underrepresented communities. **(Strengthen State-Wide Network)**
-

Chapter 3

Community Engagement Effort

A. Focus #1: Community Engagement and Inclusion Effort

Continuing Year 1 community engagement and inclusion efforts to ensure we are approaching the Project in ways that resonate with community members, while simultaneously reaching out with community education to discuss the harms of tobacco and vaping. We believe tobacco/vaping prevention messaging can further evolve to meet distinct cultural needs, and Project SUPPORT will continue to develop the best strategies for culturally- and linguistically-inclusive messaging.

1) Factors for Community Engagement

- **Identify and Involve Affected Communities:** Ensure representation from targeted groups such as youth, Black, LGBTQIA+, and small business owners in policy discussions.
 - **Listening Sessions and Feedback Loops:** Conduct follow-up focus groups to share 1st Year's insights with community experiences, ensuring that their voices shape policy development, as well as representing in the social media campaign.
 - **Broad Stakeholder Engagement:** Expand engagement to the harder-to-reach groups - Pan African and Pan Asian immigrant/refugee communities with Limited English Proficiency - for a more equitable approach to policy advocacy.
 - **Data Driven Approach:** Use data to support the Action Plan updates and improvements. Detail current engagement and successes/challenges for involving various community groups.
-

2) Framing the Issue for Community Conversations

- **Highlight Benefits and Consequences:** Use evidence of reduced youth initiation and health improvement to emphasize the importance of policy change.
- **Inclusive/Multi-level Leadership:** Foster opportunities for impacted communities to lead and shape future policy with a multi-generational approach.
- **Transparency and Accountability with Data:** Regularly update community stakeholders on policy progress and outcomes.

B. Focus #2: Strengthen State-Wide Network

Incorporating AMA's support for MSFG and becoming involved in its Racial and Health Equity (RHE) Committee in order to mobilize support for a statewide flavored tobacco ban with an equity approach. This coalition-based approach amplifies the campaign's reach and strengthens the racial and cultural framing needed to resonate across diverse communities.

1) Coalition Building and MSFG Partnership

- **Unified Strategy:** Collaborate with MSFG to bolster the statewide flavor tobacco ban initiative, building on data from Year 1, and leverage AMA's community relationships and cultural expertise to drive mobilization efforts.
 - **Joint Action Plan Execution:** Collaborate on implementing MSFG's action plan for flavor bans, focusing on data-backed arguments. This includes workshops and community sessions to raise awareness and gather support.
-

-
- **Align Goals and Objectives:** Ensure that MSFG's overarching goals are culturally adapted to engage minority communities through AMA's lens of health equity and racial justice. This involves articulating how flavored tobacco disproportionately harms communities of color and ties to broader systemic health inequities.
 - **Collaborate on Resource Creation:** Work with MSFG to co-create culturally and linguistically relevant resources and outreach materials for communities served by AMA, including translations for Hmong, KaRen, Vietnamese, Oromo, and Somali speakers

2) Racial and Health Equity (RHE) Committee Leadership

- **Committee Goals and Framework:** Support the Racial and Health Equity Committee in defining clear objectives, such as educating communities on health disparities tied to flavored tobacco, addressing barriers to healthcare access, and advocating for tobacco-free policies that prioritize racial and health equity.
 - **Develop Educational Campaigns:** Create materials that reflect each cultural group's values around health, family, and youth protection, helping communities to see the flavored tobacco ban as aligned with their wellbeing.
-

Chapter 4

Key Activities Planned for Year 2: Health Equity in Tobacco Control Policy

A. Focus #1: Community Engagement and Inclusion Effort

1) Community and Cultural Group Engagement

- **Involve Cultural Sports Teams and Leaders:** Engage youth sports teams from KaRen, Hmong, Oromo, and Somali communities to develop content that resonates with their peers. These groups could create culturally relevant messages around health and family values that discourage flavored tobacco use.
- **Support from Cultural Organizing:** Leverage support from established cultural organizations, such as the Somali Community Action Coalition and MCCA community partners. Collaborate to create a network that spreads awareness on how tobacco disproportionately affects each community's youth through a bicultural lens.

2) Community Needs Analysis and Messaging

- **Health Risks and Data Insights:** Use findings from the 1st year Tobacco surveys and Focus Group Discussions, along with AMA's Landscape Report with Minnesota's tobacco policies analysis, we will focus on the impact of flavored tobacco on youth and marginalized communities, to create compelling, data-driven content.
 - **Community-Specific Data:** Share data that reveals how specific groups—such as African American (Black, Oromo, and Somali youth), Asian American (KaRen, Hmong, Vietnamese youth) who are disproportionately affected by flavored tobacco products. This creates a narrative that emphasizes community needs and vulnerability without explicit advocacy for the ban.
 - **Highlight Success Stories and Case Studies:** Share stories from cultural groups that have impacted by tobacco/vaping/hookah, showcasing improvements in youth health outcomes as a result.
-

3) Social Media Campaign Development with United Messages

a) Mass-Reach Media Campaigns: Launch a series on social media platforms by Pan African and Pan Asian cultural groups focusing on the health and well-being of those who avoid flavored tobacco and those affected by it.

- **AMA's Social Media Campaign:** Lead a social media campaign targeting Asian and Black communities to inform and raise awareness around the flavor ban, supporting MSFG's efforts without directly advocating for the policy.
- **MCCA Partners' Cultural/Linguistic Responsive Campaigns:** The MCCA partners will create culturally and linguistically relevant content targeting specific community demographics, reinforcing the need for the flavor ban in alignment with MSFG's position.
- **Consultation with OSH and DNPAO:** Collaborate with the OSH and DNPAO communications teams to enhance the reach and impact of our media campaigns, making sure the messaging is evidence-based and strategically budgeted.

b) Cultural-Specific Hashtags: Develop hashtags that resonate culturally, such as #WellnessForYouthMN, #KaRenCommunityStrong, or #ProtectOromoYouthMN. Encourage partners and followers to use these tags to increase visibility.

c) Use Google Analytics to gather insights on: Post reach and engagement by demographic breakdown; Hashtag usage and associated engagement rates; and Overall campaign performance in driving awareness and visibility within cultural communities.

4) Evaluation and Monitoring

- **Track Engagement Metrics:** Monitor social media metrics, such as shares, likes, comments, and hashtag use, to gauge campaign reach and community response.
- **Conduct Surveys or Feedback Collection:** Use brief polls or surveys on social media to gather community feedback on their perspectives on flavored tobacco. This data can further inform the action plan and gauge shifting attitudes.

By leveraging Year 1 insights and strategic partnerships, we aim to build an inclusive, sustainable movement that enhances for policy change and empowers hard-to-reach community members to lead the champion of health equity.

B. Focus #2: Strengthen State-Wide Network

The Year 2 work plan reflects a coordinated approach, leveraging MSFG's support and Year 1's community data to execute a sustainable, action-based strategy that can advance the flavor ban. Drawing from the CDC program guide, our focus includes:

1) Ongoing Collaboration and Aligning with 2nd Yr Action Plan

- We will continue to collaborate with Smoke-Free Generation (MSFG) and Racial and Health Equity Committee as suggested above.

2) Cultural Group Mobilization

- **Community Partnership Buy-ins:** Deploy AMA's existing connections with cultural organizations and trusted leaders to disseminate MSFG's messages at local events, churches, cultural centers, and festivals (e.g., Hmong New Year, Somali Independence Day, and other heritage celebrations).
-

-
- **Empower Youth-Led Advocacy Effort:** Engage youth councils from cultural sports teams, especially those from KaRen, Hmong, Oromo, and Somali communities, in local tobacco control policy efforts, providing them with talking points and visual materials to distribute within their networks.

3) Monitoring and Reporting on Equity-Focused Progress

- **Regular Impact Reporting:** Track and report on the reach of the Racial and Health Equity (RHE) Committee's efforts, particularly noting engagement within communities of color and immigrant populations.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Set up a mechanism for community feedback on mobilization efforts, such as surveys or community forums. Collect qualitative insights on how the policy mobilization is received within diverse communities and adjust strategies accordingly.

By leveraging AMA's partnership in the RHE Committee and with MSFG, this coalition effort can raise community awareness, amplify marginalized voices at a state-wide level, and demonstrate widespread support for a flavored tobacco ban through culturally informed, equitable mobilization.

Chapter 5

Attachments

- **AMA Landscape Report: Flavored Tobacco in Minnesota**

FLAVORED TOBACCO IN MINNESOTA

Landscape Report

August 2024

Prepared by:
HACER
INVESTIGACIÓN. COMUNIDAD. IMPACTO.

Prepared for:
 **Asian Media Access**

TOBACCO USAGE

Asian Media Access (AMA) wants to ensure less tobacco usage among Black or African American and Asian or Asian American youth in local communities. AMA advocates for a flavored tobacco ban to limit access and facilitate lower tobacco usage rates among youth. The report below summarizes current usage of tobacco among youth as evidence for these important bills.

Teenage Tobacco Usage Rates

The Minnesota Student Survey (MSS) collects responses from students in 8th, 9th, and 11th grade on a variety of topics, including substance use. Figure 1 shows a Table from the 2022 MSS, providing a breakdown of reported tobacco use of students disaggregated by grade (p.49). Among respondents:

- 98% of 8th and 9th grade students reported not smoking a cigarette in the previous 30 days
- 99% of 8th and 9th grade students reported not smoking cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars, compared to 96% and 98% of 11th grade students respectively.
- Regardless of grade, 99% of students reported not using chewing tobacco, snuff, or dip nor using hookah or waterpipe to smoke tobacco in the past 30 days.

By grade, the biggest variance in usage occurs in vaping and e-cigarette containing nicotine, for which 94% of 8th graders, 93% of 9th graders, and 86% of 11th graders reported not using it in the past 30 days.

The 2017 Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey (MYTS) reported that 26.4% of students had used one or more tobacco products in the past month, an increase from 2014. However, the 2022 MSS data showed a lower rate amongst 11th graders, at only 14.9% (Table 1). Looking at disaggregated student data from the 2022 MSS, students who identify as “Asian American or Asian” reported lower rates of conventional tobacco product use (2.3%) and any tobacco use (9.5%) compared to the statewide rate of all 11th graders at 4.7% and 14.9% respectively (Table 1). However, students who identified as “Black or African American” reported use of conventional tobacco products at a comparable rate (4.3%) to the general statewide rate of all 11th graders, but slightly lower rates of any tobacco product use (12.8%) compared to the statewide rate of all 11th graders.

Figure 1. Minnesota Student Survey 2022; Statewide Tobacco Use

2022 Minnesota Student Survey

**TABLE 35A
TOBACCO USE***

Minnesota Statewide Data

During the last 30 days, on how many days did you ...		Grade		
		8th	9th	11th
		%	%	%
...smoke a cigarette?	0 days	98%	98%	96%
	1 to 2 days	1%	1%	2%
	3 to 9 days	0%	0%	1%
	10 to 19 days	0%	0%	0%
	20 to 29 days	0%	0%	0%
	All 30 days	0%	0%	0%
...smoke cigars, cigarillos or little cigars?	0 days	99%	99%	98%
	1 to 2 days	0%	1%	1%
	3 to 9 days	0%	0%	0%
	10 to 19 days	0%	0%	0%
	20 to 29 days	0%	0%	0%
	All 30 days	0%	0%	0%
...use chewing tobacco, snuff or dip?	0 days	99%	99%	99%
	1 to 2 days	0%	0%	1%
	3 to 9 days	0%	0%	0%
	10 to 19 days	0%	0%	0%
	20 to 29 days	0%	0%	0%
	All 30 days	0%	0%	0%
...vape or use an e-cigarette that contains nicotine, such as JUUL, VUSE, NJOY, Puff Bar, Blu, or Bidi Stick? [^]	0 days	94%	93%	86%
	1 to 2 days	3%	3%	4%
	3 to 9 days	1%	1%	2%
	10 to 19 days	1%	1%	2%
	20 to 29 days	0%	1%	1%
	All 30 days	1%	1%	4%
...use a hookah or a waterpipe to smoke tobacco?	0 days	99%	99%	99%
	1 to 2 days	0%	0%	1%
	3 to 9 days	0%	0%	0%
	10 to 19 days	0%	0%	0%
	20 to 29 days	0%	0%	0%
	All 30 days	0%	0%	0%

* 5th grade survey did not ask these questions.

[^] Change in question wording from 2019.

Table 1. Minnesota Student Survey Reports 2013-2022; Summary Substance Use Grade 11

	% responded “Yes”		
	All 11 th Grade Students	Asian 11 th Grade Students	Black 11 th Grade Students
Use of conventional tobacco products (cigarettes, cigars, smokeless tobacco) during the last 30 days	4.7% (n=22,868)	2.3% (n=2,017)	4.3% (n=1,882)
Use of any tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and hookah, during the last 30 days	14.9% (n=22,879)	9.5% (n=2,019)	12.8% (n=1,884)

Further disaggregation by type of tobacco use shows differences in usage rates by race. Smoking a cigarette in the last 30 days was the highest reported regardless of racial disaggregation, but students who identify as “Asian American or Asian” reported almost half the rate of cigarette usage compared to both the total 11th grade sample and compared to the students who identify as “Black or African American” (Table 2). Similarly, students who identify as “Asian American or Asian” reported lower rates of smoking cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars and lower rates of chewing tobacco, snuff, or drip compared to the total 11th grade sample and compared to students who identify as “Black or African American”. Another key difference in tobacco usage is that students who identify as “Black or African American” report twice the rate of hookah or waterpipe usage compared to all 11th grade students and three times the rate compared to students who identify as “Asian American or Asian”.

Table 2. Minnesota Student Survey Reports 2013-2022; Tobacco Use Grade 11

	% reported use in the last 30 days		
	All 11 th Grade Students	Asian 11 th Grade Students	Black 11 th Grade Students
Smoking a cigarette	3.4% (n=22,841)	1.7% (n=2,015)	3.3% (n=1,877)
Smoking cigars, cigarillos, or little cigars	1.9% (n=22,805)	1.3% (n=2,011)	2.4% (n=1,872)
Chewing tobacco, snuff, or drip	1.5% (n=22,798)	0.9% (n=2,016)	1.5% (n=1,873)
Use a hookah or waterpipe to smoke tobacco	1.3% (n=22,829)	1.0% (n=2,014)	2.7% (n=1,877)

Teenage E-Cigarette Usage Rates

While 93.4% of 11th grade students report never using tobacco (cigarettes, chew) (Minnesota Student Survey Reports 2013-2022; Tobacco Use Grade 11), only 79% report never using a vaping device or e-cigarette with nicotine (Minnesota Student Survey Reports 2013-2022; E-Cigarette Use Grade 11). Similarly, 3.3% reported having tried tobacco once or twice compared to 8.5% reporting having tried vaping or e-cigarettes once or twice.

Teenage Flavored Tobacco Usage Rates

A national report from 2019 states that 7 in 10 middle and high school students who use tobacco use a flavored product (Cullen et al. 2019). In fact, it is reported that over 80% of youth who have tried tobacco first started by trying tobacco with a flavored product (Cullen, et al., Villantl, et al.). In the MYTS, three in four students (76.3%) initiated their use of

commercial tobacco products with a flavored tobacco product (2017). Similarly, the Food and Drug Administration states that “nearly all youth who started using e-cigarettes did so with a flavored product”. The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) update from 2019 states that “among Minnesota adults ages 18-24, nearly all e-cigarette users report their usual e-cigarette is flavored, and 40.5% report their usual cigar is flavored” (MDH 2019), which highlights the power of flavored products as an entrance to e-cigarette usage as teenagers and continued usage into early adulthood.

Flavored tobacco use was reported on the 2022 MSS as a percentage of students who reported using tobacco in the previous 30 days and excludes all students who reported not using tobacco products during that timeframe. Results from the 2022 MSS show that 84.6% of 11th graders who reported using tobacco products in the previous 30 days used a flavored tobacco product (Table 3). Flavored tobacco was reported at the highest rate by 11th grade students who used smokeless tobacco in the past 30 days (38.9%) compared to those who reported using a flavored tobacco when smoking a cigarette, cigar, or using hookah. Rates of using a flavored cigarette or flavored smokeless tobacco were higher for students who identify as “Asian American or Asian” compared to “Black or African American” and compared to the 11th grade sample. However, rates of using a flavored hookah were lower for students who identify as “Asian American or Asian” compared to “Black or African American” and compared to the 11th grade sample.

Table 3. Minnesota Student Survey Reports 2013-2022; Tobacco Use Grade 11 Flavored

	% responded “Yes”		
	All 11 th Grade Students	Asian 11 th Grade Students	Black 11 th Grade Students
(If student smoked cigarette in past 30 days): Student smoked a flavored (i.e., menthol) cigarette in the past 30 days	30.5% (n=814)	28.6% (n=35)	17.7% (n=62)
(If student smoked cigar in past 30 days): Student smoked a flavored cigar in the past 30 days	26.5% (n=437)	26.9% (n=26)	26.7% (n=45)
(If student used smokeless tobacco in past 30 days): Student used flavored smokeless tobacco in the past 30 days	38.9% (n=339)	33.3% (n=18)	27.6% (n=29)
(If student used hookah in past 30 days) Student used flavored hookah in the past 30 days	24.6% (n=293)	10% (n=20)	27.5% (n=46)
(If student used tobacco in past 30 days) Student used a flavored tobacco product in the past 30 days	84.6% (n=3,415)	80.7% (n=192)	85.1% (n=241)

Flavored tobacco use is reported at a higher rate amongst 11th grade students compared to 8th and 9th grade students on the 2022 MSS (Figure 2). In fact, 8th grade students reported the lowest rates of flavored tobacco use compared to 9th and 11th grade students overall, and specifically when using e-cigarettes, cigarettes, and smokeless tobacco. Across all three grades, fruit flavor was the most reported for e-cigarette use.

MINNESOTA TOBACCO POLICY LANDSCAPE

In Minnesota, the Freedom to Breathe provisions amended the Minnesota Clean Indoor Air Act beginning October 1, 2007. This was further modified to include vaping in 2019, effective on August 1st, 2019. More recent laws affecting Minnesota include the Tobacco 21 law, limiting the purchase of tobacco to those under the age of 21, and flavored tobacco bans. Tobacco 21 went into effect on August 1, 2020 ensuring that local governments can conduct compliance checks to see that the law is being followed with regards to sales of tobacco to those under 21 years of age.

There is currently no statewide flavored tobacco ban in Minnesota. Flavored cigarettes, with the exception of menthol cigarettes, are banned federally. Some municipalities including Duluth, St. Paul, and Minneapolis have passed policies banning or restricting flavored tobacco sales but not all bans are comprehensive. The cities of Moorhead, Browns Valley, Arden Hills, Lilydale, Mendota Heights, Golden Valley, Richfield, Bloomington, Edina, and Traverse County are the locations with comprehensive bans as of January 2024. (Association for Nonsmokers Minnesota website).

One study from Olson et al (2022) compared tobacco use among youth in Minneapolis and St. Paul (places where menthol bans were implemented) to tobacco use in other areas of Minnesota which did not implement a ban. Minneapolis and St. Paul showed a greater decline in cigarette use than other parts of the state in the period between 2016 (pre-policy) to 2019 (post-policy). The menthol bans were implemented in 2018. However, youth reported that they regularly travel to areas without bans from areas with them, potentially limiting the impact of the bans (Moze et al 2022).

Figure 2. Minnesota Student Survey 2022; Statewide Flavored Tobacco Use

2022 Minnesota Student Survey

**TABLE 35B
FLAVORED TOBACCO USE^{*^}**

Minnesota Statewide Data

		Grade		
		8th	9th	11th
		%	%	%
IF VAPED IN PAST 30 DAYS: Which flavors of e-cigarettes (or e-juice) have you used in the past 30 days? (Mark ALL that apply)	Tobacco-flavored	5%	6%	5%
	Menthol or mint	23%	26%	34%
	Clove or spice	3%	3%	2%
	Fruit	68%	68%	68%
	Chocolate	4%	3%	3%
	An alcoholic drink	6%	5%	4%
	A non-alcoholic drink	9%	8%	9%
	Candy, desserts, or other sweets	32%	29%	27%
	Some other flavor	25%	25%	22%
	No flavor (unflavored)	10%	9%	7%
IF VAPED IN PAST 30 DAYS: Student used a flavored e-cigarette in the past 30 days ^{^^}	No	15%	14%	12%
	Yes	85%	86%	88%
IF SMOKED CIGARETTE IN PAST 30 DAYS: Student smoked a flavored (i.e., menthol) cigarette in the past 30 days	No	75%	71%	70%
	Yes	25%	29%	30%
IF SMOKED CIGAR IN PAST 30 DAYS: Student smoked a flavored cigar in the past 30 days	No	77%	80%	73%
	Yes	23%	20%	27%
IF USED SMOKELESS TOBACCO IN PAST 30 DAYS: Student used flavored smokeless tobacco in the past 30 days	No	74%	68%	61%
	Yes	26%	32%	39%
IF USED HOOKAH IN PAST 30 DAYS: Student used flavored hookah in the past 30 days	No	81%	83%	75%
	Yes	19%	17%	25%
IF PAST 30 DAYS TOBACCO USE: Student used a flavored tobacco product in the past 30 days ^{^^^}	No	22%	20%	15%
	Yes	78%	80%	85%

* 5th grade survey did not ask these questions.

[^] All questions on this table were new in 2022.

^{^^} Tobacco-flavor is excluded from the definition of flavored e-cigarettes.

^{^^^} This is a computed variable based on combinations of responses to two or more survey items.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL TOBACCO POLICY LANDSCAPE

Internationally and nationally there are many bans on menthol cigarettes. Over 170 cities and counties in the United States, two states, many countries including Ethiopia and Canada, and the European Union are places that have banned these cigarettes. Bans on menthol cigarettes have had a variety of effects – in the Netherlands a study showed that 26.1% of menthol cigarette smokers had quit a year after the European Union menthol cigarette ban had been implemented. In the same time frame, 14.1% of non-menthol cigarette smokers had quit (Kyriakos et al. 2022). In England, the percentage of youth reporting they had smoked menthol cigarette brands changed from 12.1% before the ban to 3% after the ban. (East et al 2022).

In the United States, a study reported that after a Massachusetts flavor ban, menthol smokers were still smoking menthol cigarettes, purchasing them out of state. (Booras et al 2022). This indicates more comprehensive bans are key.

Looking at retail compliance, shows that there was only 57% compliance of stores affected by a Chicago policy to restrict retailers that were within 500 feet of high schools from selling flavored tobacco products (Czaplicki et al 2019). Gas stations also had a lower rate of compliance than larger or chain stores (Czaplicki et al 2019). Minneapolis, St. Paul, Duluth, and Falcon Heights stores had a much higher compliance rate; however the restriction they were following was different – restricting sales of menthol to adult-only tobacco shops and liquor stores (D'Silva et al 2021). Two convenience stores added their own adult only tobacco shops as well (D'Silva et al 2021).

Given the ability for both retailers and smokers to get around these bans, a more comprehensive ban covering more regions would be more effective.

CONCLUSION

While there are often menthol bans without a flavored tobacco ban instated, these bans work best together. Studies have shown that a ban on menthol cigarettes alone may increase e-cigarette use (Kotlyar et al 2022, Buckell et al 2019, Pacek et al 2019, Buckell et al 2022, Kotlyar et al 2022, Denlinger-Apte et al 2021). Due to the high rates of flavored tobacco use by youth, a broader ban seems most likely to be effective. A bill that bans the sale of flavored tobacco, HF 2177 was introduced in the 2023-2024 legislative season but has not yet made it to the senate. AMA aims to inform communities about current and future legislation related to flavored tobacco to make our communities healthier for youth and for all.

REFERENCES

- Booras A, Wiener R, Maccarone J, et al. . Impact of the Massachusetts menthol ban on perceptions and cigarette use behavior at a large safety-net hospital: a longitudinal survey and qualitative study. 2022. <https://assets.researchsquare.com/files/rs-2078170/v1/d7be9801-0fcd-4b18-8876-084bb7a5a96c.pdf?c=1667329163>
- Buckell J, Fucito LM, Krishnan-Sarin S, O'Malley S, Sindelar JL. Harm reduction for smokers with little to no quit interest: can tobacco policies encourage switching to e-cigarettes? *Tob Control*. 2022;32(e2):e173–e179.
- Buckell J, Marti J, Sindelar JL. Should flavours be banned in cigarettes and e-cigarettes? Evidence on adult smokers and recent quitters from a discrete choice experiment. *Tob Control*. 2019;28(2):168.
- ClearWay Minnesota, Minnesota Department of Health, Tobacco Use in Minnesota: 2018 Update. 2019.
- Cullen, K.A., et al., Flavored tobacco product use among middle and high school students—United States, 2014–2018. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 2019. 68(39): p. 839.
- Cullen, K.A., et al., Notes from the field: use of electronic cigarettes and any tobacco product among middle and high school students—United States, 2011–2018. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 2018. 67(45): p. 1276.
- Czaplicki L, Cohen JE, Jones MR, et al. . Compliance with the City of Chicago's partial ban on menthol cigarette sales. *Tob Control*. 2019;28(2):161–167.
- Denlinger-Apte RL, Cassidy RN, Carey KB, et al. . The impact of menthol flavoring in combusted tobacco on alternative product purchasing: a pilot study using the Experimental Tobacco Marketplace. *Drug Alcohol Depend*. 2021;218:108390.
- Denlinger-Apte RL, Lockhart DE, Strahley AE, et al. . “I think it’s a good idea for the people that’s young, the kids, but for someone like me it’s a bad idea.”—interviews about a US menthol cigarette ban with people who smoke menthol cigarettes. *Drug Alcohol Depend*. 2022;232:109293.
- D’Silva J, Moze J, Kingsbury JH, et al. . Local sales restrictions significantly reduce the availability of menthol tobacco: findings from four Minnesota cities. *Tob Control*. 2021;30(5):492–497.

D'Silva J, O'Gara E, Fryer CS, Boyle RG. "Because there's just something about that menthol": exploring African American smokers' perspectives on menthol smoking and local menthol sales restrictions. *Nicotine Tob Res.* 2021;23(2):357–363.

East KA, Reid JL, Burkhalter R, et al. . Evaluating the outcomes of the menthol cigarette ban in England by comparing menthol cigarette smoking among youth in England, Canada, and the US, 2018-2020. *JAMA Netw Open.* 2022;5(5):e2210029–e2210e29.

Guydish JR, Straus ER, Le T, Gubner N, Delucchi KL. Menthol cigarette use in substance use disorder treatment before and after implementation of a county-wide flavoured tobacco ban. *Tob Control.* 2021;30(6):616–622.

Kotlyar M, Shanley R, Dufresne SR, Corcoran GA, Hatsukami DK. Effect of restricting menthol flavored cigarettes or e-cigarettes on smoking behavior in menthol smokers. *Prev Med.* 2022;165(Pt B):107243.

Kotlyar M, Shanley R, Dufresne SR, Corcoran GA, Hatsukami DK. Effect on tobacco use and subjective measures of including e-cigarettes in a simulated ban of menthol in combustible cigarettes. *Nicotine Tob Res.* 2022;24(9):1448–1457.

Kurti MK, Schroth KRJ, Ackerman C, et al. . Availability of menthol cigarettes in Oakland, California after a partial flavor ban. *Prev Med Rep.* 2020;20:101200.

Kyriakos CN, Driezen P, Fong G, et al. . Impact of the European Union's menthol cigarette ban on smoking cessation outcomes: longitudinal findings from the 2020–2021 ITC Netherlands Surveys. *Tob Control.* 2022. doi:10.1136/tc-2022-057428.

Mills, SD, Peddireddy, S, Kurtzman, R, Hill, F, Catalan, V, Bissram, JS., Ribisl, KM. The impact of menthol cigarette bans: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Nicotine & Tob Research.* 2024. doi:10.1093/ntr/ntae011

Minnesota Department of Education. Minnesota student survey. 2022.
<https://education.mn.gov/MDE/dse/health/mss/>

Minnesota Department of Health, Teens and Tobacco in Minnesota: Highlights from the 2017 Minnesota Youth Tobacco Survey. 2018.

Moze JM, O'Gara EK, Fritz Fogel K, et al. . Youth perspectives on menthol sales restrictions in Minneapolis and Duluth, Minnesota. *Health Promot Pract.* 2022;24(6):1163–1173.

O'Connor RJ, Bansal-Travers M, Carter LP, Cummings KM. What would menthol smokers do if menthol in cigarettes were banned? Behavioral intentions and simulated demand. *Addiction.* 2012;107(7):1330–1338.

Olson LT, Coats EM, Rogers T, et al. . Youth tobacco use before and after local sales restrictions on flavored and menthol tobacco products in Minnesota. *J Adolesc Health*. 2022;70(6):978–984.

Pacek LR, Oliver JA, Sweitzer MM, McClernon FJ. Young adult dual combusted cigarette and e-cigarette users' anticipated responses to a nicotine reduction policy and menthol ban in combusted cigarettes. *Drug Alcohol Depend*. 2019;194:40–44.

United States Department of Health and Human Services, FDA, Center for Tobacco Products, Modifications to Compliance Policy for Certain Deemed Tobacco Products Guidance for Industry DRAFT GUIDANCE. 2019.

Villanti, A.C., et al., Flavored tobacco product use among U.S. young adults. *Am J Prev Med*, 2013. 44(4): p. 388-91.

Yang Y, Lindblom EN, Salloum RG, Ward KD. The impact of a comprehensive tobacco product flavor ban in San Francisco among young adults. *Addict Behav Rep*. 2020;11:100273.

Yang Y, Lindblom EN, Ward KD, Salloum RG. How smokers of menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars might respond to FDA's proposed bans. *Nicotine Tob Res*. 2022;24(10):1645–1653.