Menthol is a peppermint flavored anesthetic tobacco companies added to reduce the harshness of cigarettes and other tobacco products. This makes it easier for youth and inexperienced smokers to start and harder to quit. Menthol smokers are less likely than non-menthol smokers to successfully quit smoking.

Menthol smokers inhale deeper and longer, increasing exposure to 4,000 chemicals like tar and nicotine by 30-70%.

In the U.S., African American smokers are nearly 11X more likely to use menthol than Whites.

Sections of Milwaukee’s central city have 3X more tobacco retailers than in its suburbs.

45,000 AFRICAN AMERICANS DIE FROM TOBACCO RELATED ILLNESSES

National Menthol Use:

- 8 out of 10 African American adults
- 2 out of 10 White adults

- 7 out of 10 African American students (Middle/High School)
- 5 out of 10 White students (Middle/High School)

MENTHOL USE IN WISCONSIN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>White</th>
<th>African American</th>
<th>Hispanic</th>
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<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>46%</td>
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The data below is from 2013 and 2015, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance Survey (BRFSS). All data is weighted to the Wisconsin population.

The Play Book

BIG TOBACCO Marketing Tactics

- **PRODUCT:** Easy to inhale and highly addictive.
- **PLACE:** Contracts with retailers to highlight menthol products with premium shelf space, visibility and elaborate advertising displays.
- **PROMOTION:** Concerts, festivals, bar nights, sports, and celebrity endorsements.
- **PRICE:** Discounts and multi-pack coupons that target low income minority communities.
- **TARGETING:** Deliberate sponsorship of historically black colleges and universities, prominent African American organizations and media outlets, and black musicians neutralizes their ability to speak out against Big Tobacco’s overt targeting of the black community.

Take Action

Be Part of the Solution:

- **JOIN:** Join a local coalition to monitor and disrupt Big Tobacco targeting.
- **REJECT:** Reject tobacco funding in your organization.
- **SPEAK OUT:** Get educated and educate others about targeting of menthol products.
- **TAKE ACTION:** Collaborate with local leaders and retailers to reduce menthol advertising and couponing.

References:

- A Growing Problem: Examining a Decade of Menthol Smoking Rates, Truth Initiative and Tobacco Use Among African Americans, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids, 2017
- Health Equity Tool Kit, TOBWISE.org, 2017