



No Menthol

SUNDAY

2021 Community Event Toolkit

MAY 16

A NEW DAY!

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!"

- Isaiah 43:18-19 (NIV)



THE CENTER FOR
BLACK HEALTH & EQUITY

The Center for Black Health & Equity
faith-based initiatives
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Introduction

A NEW DAY!

The Center for Black Health & Equity's No Menthol Sunday is our annual opportunity for faith communities to address the detrimental impact tobacco is having on African American communities. Each year we encourage faith leaders to dedicate this day to educating congregants about smoking, vaping and the role of flavored tobacco products -- especially menthol. Even though the current pandemic has increased the risk of smoking-related death in our community, there is so much that we can all do! It's a new day, and progress toward a complete ban on menthols and mentholated tobacco products is near.

This year's theme, A New Day!, encourages us to embrace the opportunity to build tobacco-free communities that are healthy and just. Even after years of losing the battle for a comprehensive flavor ban, and after COVID-19 has exacerbated health disparities, we have not lost heart. Isaiah 43:18-19 reminds us to forget the things that are behind us because a new day is upon us! Tomorrow is in the past, and today brings a fresh start. Every day is a new opportunity to advocate for a healthier future that makes menthol and tobacco-related disease a thing of past.

No Menthol Sunday is also an excellent time for people who smoke to begin their quit journey anew! Faith communities can commit to creating comfortable, safe spaces for those who struggle with nicotine addiction. Genuine support and an open ear for transparent conversations are very important. Today, we invite tobacco users to seek the necessary resources they need to be successful.

No Menthol Sunday serves to raise our consciousness about important issues in Black health. When people of faith remain vigilant, educate youth, and inspire community action, we will begin to move toward total health justice. It's a new day!

SPECIAL THANKS TO LOCAL AND NATIONAL PARTNERS EXPANDING
THE NO MENTHOL SUNDAY MOVEMENT





“Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!”

- Isaiah 43:18-19 (NIV)



FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

After a 10-year fight, the U.S. House of Representatives passed the Youth Tobacco Epidemic Act in 2020. This was a major win as it eliminated the sale of most flavored tobacco products including mint and menthol! But now a total ban on menthol is in the hands of the Food & Drug Administration. FDA). They know that African Americans smoke less but die more from smoking-related illness. They know that menthol makes it harder to start smoking and more difficult to quit. And they know that 85% of African American smokers choose menthols. Yet, they have not instituted a ban.

The FDA has been issued a court order to respond to a petition for a menthol ban. You can join the fight by asking your local representatives to support a ban on menthol.

Menthol:

Essential Talking Points

Menthol is a minty flavor that makes it easier to start smoking and harder to quit.

- **Most African American smokers smoke menthols (85%).**
- **Most minorities who are smokers smoke menthols.**
- **Most kids who start smoking try menthols first.**

The tobacco industry intentionally tries to get African Americans to buy menthol cigarettes.

- **Menthol cigarettes cost less in Black communities**
- **There are more and larger advertisements for menthols in Black communities**
- **The tobacco industry pays many Black political leaders, and sponsors HBCUs, festivals, Black-owned newspapers and other prominent civil rights organizations.**

The FDA has the power to ban menthol from tobacco products, but they have spent years deciding.

- **Banning menthol would save Black lives.**
- **If menthol were banned, a lot of people would never start smoking.**

The tobacco industry pays Black leaders to say that a ban on menthol would criminalize African Americans, but this is not true.

- **A menthol ban would prohibit selling menthols, not possession them.**

PRESENTATION & SERMON TOPICS

FOR CHRISTIAN BELIEVERS:

We All Struggle

While some are more willing than others to admit it, we ALL have something with which we are struggling. The Apostle Paul described it as “a thorn in the flesh.” On a different occasion, he cried out, “The good I would do, I do not, for when I would do it, evil is ever present.”

If we would be honest, at some point we all find ourselves in a predicament where we may feel like giving up on a personal goal. For some that may be weight loss; for others it may be procrastinating, or even smoking. The bottom line is that no matter how many times you may have attempted and failed, it is okay. Today is a new day. We must do as the scripture states in Isaiah 43:18-19: *Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing.* There is still a new opportunity to succeed before you. See yourself in a new place. Envision yourself free from that weight of smoking, eating, excessive shopping or whatever it may be.

When beginning a new goal, commit it to the Lord for direction. Proverbs 16:3 says, “Commit thy works to the Lord, and He shall direct your path.” That path may be through the assistance of cessation classes, medical intervention or through some other method. Know that none of us are perfect. Lamentations 3:22 tells us it is simply because of the Lord’s mercy that we have not been consumed. He loves us and gives us a new set of mercies with each new day!

The Power to Overcome Temptation

One fundamental teaching of Christianity is that God is willing to help believers to resist temptation. No Menthol Sunday is a good time to discuss the difficulty in resisting temptations such as cigars and cigarettes, but also how it is possible to rely on the Holy Spirit for help. In 1 Corinthians 10:13, Paul states that “no temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man.” This means that no one is alone in their fight against temptation. He goes on to say, though, that God is faithful to provide a way out so that one may endure it. This can be very encouraging for Christian believers. Further, it may be insightful to merchants in your congregation. They can help to be “a way out” by discontinuing the sale of mentholated tobacco products.

FOR BUDDHIST FOLLOWERS:

Choose the Path that Leads Away from Suffering

In Buddhism, it is honorable to remain open to cravings while not giving in to them. Use No Menthol Sunday as a time to acknowledge the presence of the temptation, but to encourage resistance. Additionally, discuss the ways in which overcoming addiction can lead to freedom and clarity of mind. Remind congregants that smoking is a path that leads to suffering. Encourage those who would like to quit smoking to take time on No Menthol Sunday to meditate and stay with the feeling, knowing that it will pass naturally. Talk to followers about how ending the sale of mentholated tobacco products can be the path that leads away from the suffering of others.

FOR JEWISH CONGREGANTS:

Watch Yourself Scrupulously

In Judaism, care for one's health is not only a vital religious value, but a halachic obligation (Deot 4:1). While we know that the Lord takes care of the simple, or those with childlike faith (Psalm 116:6), it is important to exercise wisdom when it comes to health. According to Deuteronomy 4: 9, Jewish people must "watch [themselves] scrupulously". A part of this means protecting one's self from the harmful effects of smoking. On No Menthol Sunday, remind your congregation that "a person must distance himself from things which destroy the body and accustom himself to things which heal the body" (Maimonides' Mishneh Torah).

Get Back Up Again

Quitting smoking is challenging. It is common for a person to explore several methods and try multiple times before finding success. The Torah teaches that a good person is not one that finds immediate success; rather, a good person is one that perseveres. On No Menthol Sunday, encourage those who want to quit by reminding them of King Solomon's words in Proverbs 24: 16: "A righteous man falls down seven times and gets up."

FOR FOLLOWERS OF ISLAM:

Do Not Harm Yourself or Others

Teachings in the Qur'an clearly express the importance of taking care of one's health. According to Qur'an 2:195, a follower must not make their own hands contribute to their own destruction. On No Menthol Sunday, discuss the ways in which smoking destroys the body. In addition, remind congregants that smoking tobacco can spoil prayer, the pillar of Deen, by emitting an offensive odor. Most importantly, discuss how second-hand smoke does great harm to others. Followers of the Islamic faith should remember the teachings of the Prophet: "There shall be no infliction of harm on oneself or others." For those who desire to quit smoking, invite them to start with the fast of Ramadan.

FOR HINDU FOLLOWERS: Embrace a Life of Bliss

Hinduism discourages vyasana, or unhealthy dependence on substances such as tobacco. In fact, caring for the body is a sacred spiritual practice. Hindu teachings compel followers to achieve a spiritual life that is free from suffering and full of bliss. On No Menthol Sunday, remind followers that smoking tobacco cannot lead to such a spiritual life. Discuss the ways in which quitting smoking and ending the sale of mentholated tobacco products can be essential in doing good to others.





#NMS IDEAS & ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITIES FOR QUIT SUPPORT

MAKE A PLEDGE

Whether for a day or a week, challenge your congregation to join the movement by not using tobacco in observance of No Menthol Sunday. Provide plenty of copies of our Abstinence Pledge and make a sincere request for your members to sign it. Plan to follow up with everyone's progress and provide support to those who need it.



DELIVER QUIT SUPPORT

If your place of worship is actively delivering food or supplies, include printed information such as palm cards that direct them to resources for quitting. Remember that volunteers not have all of the facts and stats on tobacco. They can always point community members to 1-800-QUIT-NOW (1-800-784-8669). This number will connect with them with certified cessation counselors who can help callers develop a personalized plan to quit smoking.



PATHWAYS TO FREEDOM DVD SCREENING

Pop some popcorn and invite your congregation and plan a virtual watch party for faith community to view Pathways to Freedom: Leading the Way to a Smoke Free Community©. This educational cessation video may be your community's first step in reducing the use of tobacco and supporting one another in quitting smoking altogether. Ask small groups to discuss during their virtual gatherings. Request your hard copy DVD or get online access at www.centerforblackhealth.org.



ACTIVITIES FOR QUIT SUPPORT

HANDLING CRAVINGS:

When a cigarette craving hits, it may be tough to resist the urge to smoke. But you're not at the mercy of these cravings. Each time you resist a tobacco craving, you're one step closer to stopping tobacco for good.

1. Avoid your triggers:

It is important to know your triggers and understand the best way to deal with them. Distract yourself, find something to take your mind off the craving. Go for a walk, take a deep breath, eat a healthy snack or call a friend. Remember the important thing is to stay positive and know that you will overcome what has triggered you.

2. Get physical:

Physical activity can help distract you from tobacco cravings. Get out for a walk or jog, run in place or walk up and down a set of stairs. It is also helpful to practice relaxation techniques, such as deep-breathing exercises, yoga or muscle stretching.

3. Call for reinforcement:

Reach out to your friend or family member for help in your effort to resist a craving. Let them know that you need support by chatting on the phone or going for a walk together. Being transparent about your cravings will help them know how to better support you.

For more, visit: <https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/campaign/tips/quit-smoking/guide/cravings.html>



KICK-OFF WEBINAR EVENT

Just before No Menthol Sunday, invite local convenient store owners, policy-makers and community leaders to join a webinar designed to announce the big day and engage them in activities. Have the mayor make a special tobacco-free proclamation, and challenge store owners to pledge not to sell mentholated tobacco on the observance day. Highlight youth stories about the impact of vaping in their schools, and don't forget to invite a prominent faith leader to share a few words of encouragement.

Visit www.nomentholsunday.org to check out a few kick-offs around the country.

MAKE IT YOUR OWN

No Menthol Sunday is about finding unique and effective ways to educate your community and raise awareness about the need to quit smoking and end the sale of mentholated tobacco products. Use your own creativity to engage your faith community in this campaign. Celebrate "No Menthol Sabbath" or "No Menthol Praise Days" on any day in May.

Don't forget to let us know how it is going by emailing your stories to info@centerforblackhealth.org.





Sample

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENT

Today is No Menthol Sunday, and we would like to take time to talk about protecting Black health and Black lives. Smoking kills 47,000 African Americans per year. That's more than homicides, suicides, AIDS-related death, car accidents and police brutality combined.

But how many know that today is a new day? As scriptures says, old things are passed away and He makes all things new! Even in the midst of an international pandemic, and even as COVID-19 has put Black lives at greater risk, we know a new day is upon us!

It's time to get tobacco and menthols out of our communities for good, and there is something that we can all do!

Right now, we are urging the Food & Drug Administration to put a ban on the sale of all flavored tobacco products --- especially menthols. A ban like this would encourage many African Americans to quit smoking and vaping--or never start. It would save Black lives and Black lungs. Let's remind the FDA that it's a new day, and it's time to do what's right.

Join faith communities everywhere on this No Menthol Sunday. It's a new day for advocacy, a new day for change and a perfect time to give a little extra support to those want to quit tobacco for good. Call 1-800-Quit-Now for help quitting, and visit www.nomentholsunday.org to learn how you can get involved in the movement!



CHURCH & SOCIAL DISTANCING IDEAS

KEEP IT OLD SCHOOL

Just because everyone is going digital doesn't mean your church should. Create a phone tree and ask deacons or volunteers to call everyone with encouraging words. Remind them to observe personal prayer time and stay on track with a scripture reading plan.

PARKING LOT CHURCH

Grab a classic FM transmitter and invite congregants to the church parking lot to listen to the day's sermon from their vehicles. Allow everyone to dress up and enjoy the ritual of going to church. Check your local ordinances for rules and details.

CORONAVIRUS PRAYER WALK

Schedule a date and time when members can pray collectively while walking through their respective neighborhoods. Knowing that everyone is praying at once can be powerful.

PUT SERVICE BEFORE SERVICE

Even if you're not having service, your church can still be of service. Identify needs in your community and encourage your low-risk members to help deliver carefully handled meals or supplies to their neighbors' doorsteps.

CHURCH IN A BOX

Coordinate a church unlock day so that low-risk admins may enter the church to package and mail out supplies for communion or other sacraments. Members will appreciate the chance to observe meaningful rituals at home. Be sure no more than five people are in the building at once.

VIDEO SING-ALONG AND SMALL GROUP STUDY

Use web applications like Zoom or Google Hangouts so that teams or small groups can meet "in person" via video. This way, they may sing together, study together, and most of all, *be* together.

CAR PARADE

Send an email inviting members to decorate their cars and join a church car parade. Set a meet up spot, crank up gospel music and start the caravan. Don't forget to publicize the route so that members at home can be waiting with their own cheerful signs! Be sure to observe social distancing.

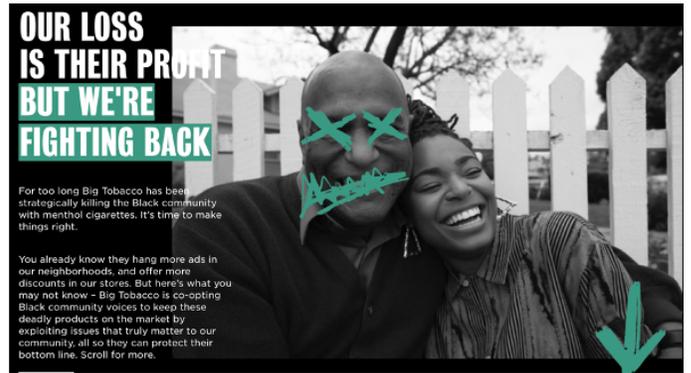
STAY CONNECTED WITH YOUR CONGREGATION

Send home any projects that would have normally been done at church and ask children to share photos of the projects they do. Post the pictures on your church's website, social media platforms or e-newsletter. Family activities can also be sent to the homes of congregants.

CONTENT WORTH SHARING

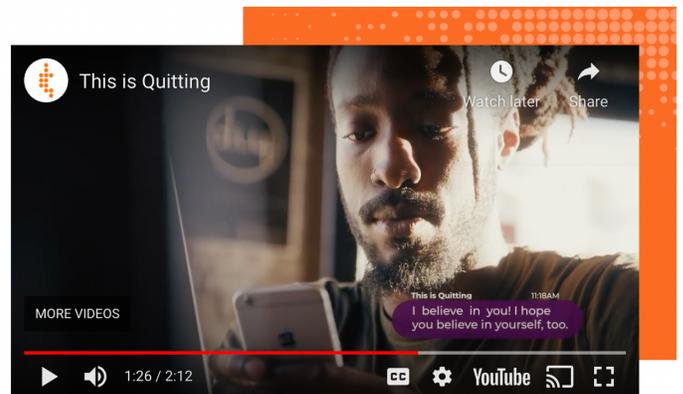
California's We are Not Profit

It's time to end Big Tobacco's strategic killing of the Black community with menthol cigarettes. This campaign features facts about how the tobacco industry uses African American civic leaders to manipulate the Black community. View campaign at tobaccofreeca.com/we-are-not-profit.



This is Quitting

This is Quitting is a free and anonymous text messaging program from Truth Initiative designed to help young people quit vaping. All support is tailored according to age. Learn more at <https://truthinitiative.org/thisisquitting>



Keep up with the Movement

This document developed by the Public Health Law Center (PHLC) provides select examples of U.S. states, cities, and counties that restrict the sale of flavored tobacco products including menthol. To track the city-by-city movement to ban menthol or for legal assistance in advocating for a ban in your community, visit www.phlc.org.

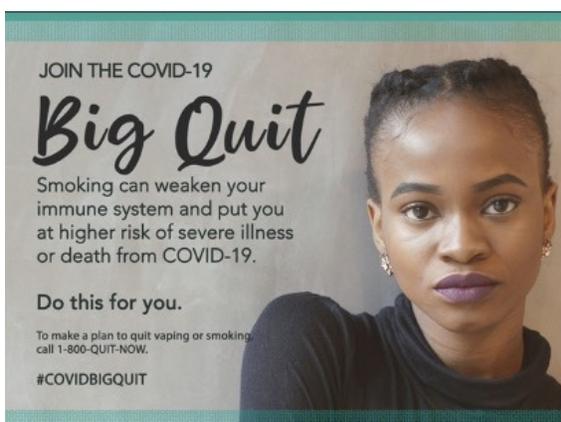


Join the COVID BIG QUIT

The current pandemic has created a greater need, now more than ever, for African Americans to seek and obtain cessation services to help them to quit smoking. Studies have shown that African Americans want to quit smoking and yet they are unsuccessful. Experts attribute this struggle to menthol which is 1) known to be most often smoked by African Americans, and 2) known to make it more difficult to quit.

Smoking rates in the African American community are particularly concerning since smoking weakens the immune system and increases one's risk of severe illness from COVID-19.

Help support a movement for quitting by amplifying the campaign.
[Download these images.](#)





SHARE THIS
**TIPS
FROM
FORMER
SMOKERS**

While most Americans understand that smoking cigarettes causes serious health effects, those who start smoking as youth or young adults may not realize smoking-related disease can happen relatively early in life. Illness may also cause them to miss important life milestones and can deeply affect the daily lives of their family members and friends.

The new stories featured in the Tips From Former Smokers® (Tips®) campaign offer two perspectives: people living with serious illnesses caused by smoking, and those caring for loved ones with smoking-related disease. These hard-hitting ads can be used to spark conversation

EVENT DAY RESOURCES & TEMPLATES

MASKS

Face masks commemorating No Menthol Sunday 2021 are available. They serve as a reminder that it is still important for us to make sure we are doing what it takes to slow the spread of COVID-19. Visit www.NoMentholSunday.org to submit a purchase order. To ensure your masks arrive on time, be sure to place your order as early as possible.



SOCIAL MEDIA COVER IMAGE

Help us promote the event by adding this image to your Facebook and Twitter profile. Use the hashtag #NoMentholSunday or #NMS2021. Visit www.NoMentholSunday.org to download.



EVENT DAY RESOURCES & TEMPLATES

SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS

Remind congregants of the observance day by posting these graphics to your website and social media outlets. Use the hashtag #NoMentholSunday or #NMS2021. Visit www.NoMentholSunday.org to download.



POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Ready to use presentation slides with facts to kick off your sermon or No Menthol Sunday talk. Visit www.NoMentholSunday.org to download.



OUR POSITION ON MENTHOL



THE CENTER FOR
BLACK HEALTH & EQUITY

Tobacco-related illness is still the primary cause of death for African Americans. For decades, The Center of Black Health & Equity (formerly NAATPN, Inc.) has fought against the marketing and sale of deadly tobacco products to African Americans. It is commonly known that menthol makes smoking easier to start and harder to quit. This is no exception for African Americans who consistently report more quit attempts than the general smoking population, yet experience lower success rates. Because more than 85% of African American smokers prefer menthols (as compared to 30% of Caucasian smokers), we have given particular attention to the elimination of mentholated tobacco products.

The tobacco industry has executed a calculated, menthol-centered strategy to establish a strong presence in African American communities, appropriate African American culture, and create a dependency on tobacco funding. As such, the predominate use of menthols among African American smokers is well documented among public health authorities. However, we have observed the way in which tobacco control advocates have negotiated to exclude menthol as a means to protect other demographics from the harms of candy-flavored tobacco. We consider this to be counterproductive and an affront to the integrity of public health efforts. Further, we consider this to be reflective of historical racism.

Menthol
How to fight for this social justice issue.

- Acknowledge the historical racism that has left African Americans unprotected.**
Public health advocates have been slow to prioritize African Americans in the move toward a tobacco-free society. A ban on menthol would save Black lives, yet policy change has focused on protecting other vulnerable demographics.
- Reject the tobacco industry's counterfeit role as Black community ally.**
The tobacco industry claims to honor Black lives while denying responsibility for the 45,000 Black deaths they cause each year. Even though there is no evidence that a ban on menthol will result in over-policing, the tobacco industry pays Black civic leaders to spread this misleading message.
- Fight against the sale and marketing of menthols.**
The tobacco industry saturates Black neighborhoods with menthol ads and discounts. They buy off Black elected officials and even appropriate Black culture—all to promote their deadly products. Citizens and public health advocates must stand against this kind of predatory marketing.

To protect Black health, we must eliminate:

- Predatory marketing to vulnerable populations
- Dense advertising and sampling vans
- Price discounts in African American neighborhood stores
- Sponsorships for African American events
- Donations to African American organizations, elected officials and thought leaders
- Attempts to influence our communities with misleading information and "alternative facts"

Visit www.nomentholsunday.org to download talking points for discussing menthol as a social justice issue.

African American populations have been disregarded as casualties of corporate profits and tobacco policy quick-wins. In order to address this social justice issue, The Center for Black Health & Equity is committed to **1) challenging the tobacco industry's infiltration into African American communities 2) promoting innovative, culturally competent cessation programs, and 3) educating community decision makers on effective strategies for enacting comprehensive tobacco-free policies.** Most importantly, the issue of menthol must be viewed through the lens of racial equality and addressed through the work of restorative justice.

Visit www.centerforblackhealth.org to read the full statement.

No Menthol Sunday Abstinence Pledge

In observance of No Menthol Sunday
on May 16, 2021

I do hereby resolve to protect my health, the health of my family, and the health of my community by pledging to abstain from tobacco products for:

_____ 24 hours

_____ 3 days

_____ 1 week

By taking this pledge, I hope to stand as a model to my family and my faith community.

Print Name

Signature

Date

Take the Citywide or Statewide Pledge

No Menthol Sunday is a unique way to engage your area coalitions in tobacco control efforts. It is an excellent opportunity to build a faith-based network and get to know key leaders and influencers within your state's African American communities. In addition, there are many ways to promote No Menthol Sunday and use the observance day activities to build awareness about important tobacco-related community initiatives. It is even possible to use No Menthol Sunday to create buy-in for a new policy or reinforce an existing one.

Consider the many ways you may coordinate No Menthol Sunday events across your city or state. Keep in mind that participation in No Menthol Sunday is partnership activity with The Center for Black Health & Equity, will fulfill requirements of RFA-DP20-2001.

Our goal is to see participation in all 50 states.

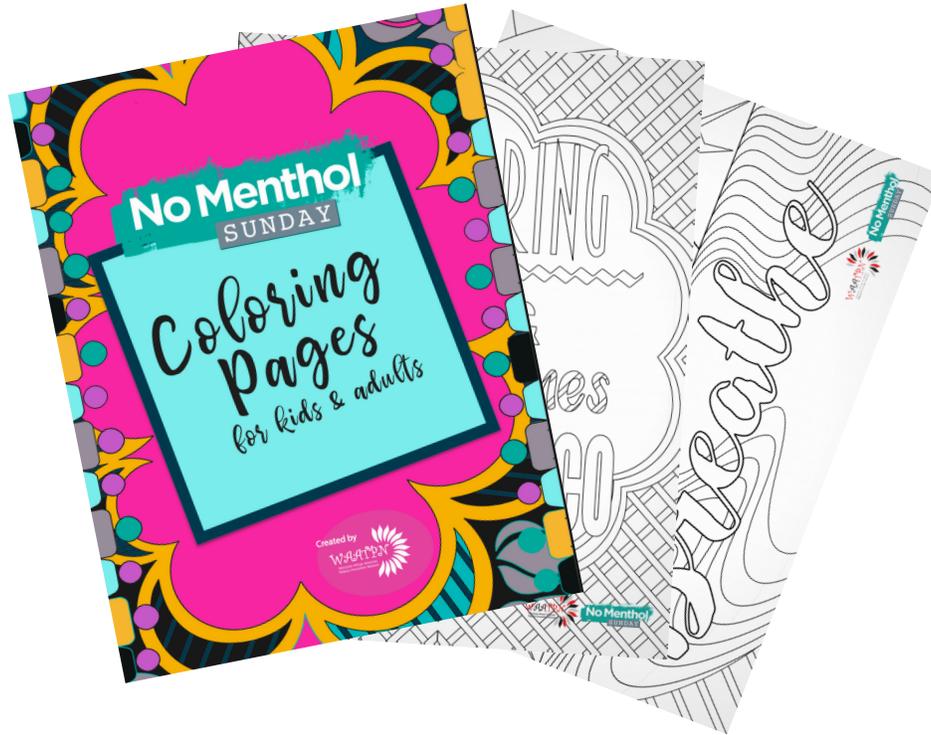
Submit your city or state pledge to participate and register your events at NoMentholSunday.org.

There are many ways for states to observe the day:

- Build your network of faith-based organizations to educate communities about importance of tobacco-free policies
- Offer free NRT during the week of No Menthol Sunday
- Promote your state's 1-800-QUIT-NOW phone line and take note of calls during No Menthol Sunday
- Promote the COVID-19 Big Quit sharing information about the ways in which smoking and vaping can increase your risk of severe COVID-19 infection and event death

Contact Greg Bolden at gbolden@centerforblackhealth.org to confirm your intention to participate!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:



[DOWNLOAD THE COLORING BOOK](#)

No Menthol SUNDAY

City & State Planning Guide

30-Day Runway to No Menthol Sunday

DAY 1-3 <p>Pass along the NMS announcement or form letter to leadership for approval.</p>	DAY 4-5 <p>Submit your State Pledge to Participate and then download the toolkit. Select 2 activities your state can help execute.</p>	DAY 6-10 <p>Announce NMS by placing a badge on your website and in your e-newsletter. Send personal notes to coalition members.</p>	DAY 11-16 <p>Develop a list of local churches and begin cold calling or emailing them to invite them to host a NMS event. Request face-time with leaders to discuss or make a presentation directly to faith groups.</p>
DAY 17-20 <p>Support churches and coalitions in planning their NMS activities and registering events online. Help them identify the most feasible activity for the size of their group.</p>	DAY 21-25 <p>Contact your local media. Update the press release template and email it to newspapers. Ask local news stations and podcasters place 15 sec. audio spots for free. Contact your city officials to make a proclamation.</p>	DAY 26-28 <p>Rally local youth to post about NMS on social media. Share videos, photos, and graphics. Use #NomentholSunday</p>	DAY 29-30 <p>Enjoy a day of educating congregants and unifying the community under one cause. Document the day and plan to take a survey later this week. We can't wait to hear from you!</p>

[DOWNLOAD THE PLANNING GUIDE](#)

After No Menthol Sunday: Advocacy

In order to create or change a policy, such as Tobacco-Free Church Grounds, you must first develop and implement a strategic advocacy campaign. This is a quick guide to developing an effective advocacy campaign to achieve public health policy change in your church or your community.

1. Gather background information

Before you begin an advocacy campaign, do your research. You need to be certain that policy change is the best way to solve the problem. You'll also need to know the latest science and evidence in support of your public health issue, the current laws and regulations, and what gaps may exist. Research any past advocacy efforts on the same issue, so you know what worked... and what didn't.

2. Set clear policy objectives

A successful campaign starts with clear objectives that are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. Make sure your objectives are linked to policy change and existing evidence, and that they include the following: a policy actor(s) or decision-maker(s), the action or decision you want them to take, and a timeline by which you want them to act or decide.

3. Build strong partnerships

Working in coalition or partnership with others is the best way to demonstrate support for your issue. Identify a core group of organizations that will work together to drive the campaign forward on a day-to-day basis. Next, identify a range of old and new allies willing to speak out in favor of your objectives. To identify those allies, look to civil society and professional or business groups from the health, education, and economic and scientific sectors.

4. Know the political landscape

Understanding the policy-making process and which decision-makers and influencers to target is key to achieving your objectives. Once you understand the political landscape, strategize about when during the process you can successfully engage, intervene, and influence your targets. You will also need to know decision-makers' positions on your policy change objectives and identify any opposition you will encounter

5. Help develop legislation or regulations

Early on in the process, you'll want to prioritize drafting of the actual policy, using the strongest wording possible. As an advocate, the role that you will play during this phase is likely to vary. Having a lawyer or policy expert as a resource is very important. At a minimum, they can help you analyze the strengths and weaknesses of existing or emerging policies in accordance with evidence-based best practices.

6. Determine what is non-negotiable

Compromise is sometimes necessary in advocacy. However, it is important to know your limits. You won't necessarily help your cause if you support the passage of weak policies. You and your core partners will need to determine together what is non-negotiable, ideally early in the advocacy process.

7. Identify legislative sponsors and policy champions Strong

Strong sponsors willing to champion a policy throughout the process are valuable assets for any campaign. Seek out influential and respected policymakers on relevant committees or in key positions who you can trust to act as loyal partners and effective champions. Remember that it takes time to cultivate such champions. Meet with them regularly to understand their concerns and needs, agree on how best to work together, and share information. Always be available to act as a resource for your champion.

8. Develop your key strategies

Persuading decision-makers to take action is essential for affecting changes in policy. There are many ways this can be done, but most successful campaigns employ some combination of the following three strategies: 1) direct interaction with decision-makers and influencers, 2) using media and social media to influence decision-makers and the public, and 3) grassroots mobilization to engage a strong base of supporters and organizational allies to encourage change and counter opposition or indifference.

9. Prepare to communicate effectively

Effective communication underpins every successful advocacy campaign. First, define your different audiences and work to understand their information needs, interests, concerns, and the best communication channels to reach them. Using this information, you can then design targeted, persuasive messages and identify the most compelling messengers and spokespeople. Finally, it's important to monitor media and social media engagement on your issue so you know what is being said about your campaign and can respond quickly

10. Formulate your campaign action plan

The campaign action plan is your roadmap for the campaign, leading from objectives to strategies and then to messages. Carefully consider all the elements of your plan in collaboration with your core group of partners. In addition to key activities, the action plan should also outline the necessary resources, responsible persons, and timeline. Remember that your plan is a living document that should be reviewed regularly and updated as the political landscape changes.

11. Run your campaign

With a detailed plan in place, it's time to implement. Keep in mind that a successful campaign requires strategic planning alongside strategic implementation. The campaign process is dynamic and ever changing, and every campaign will require you to respond to unanticipated events, disagreements within your network, changing decision-makers and new opposition. Don't be afraid to be flexible, revisit your plan and update it as needed.

12. Monitor and evaluate progress

Monitoring and evaluating implementation of your advocacy plan will be one of the most critical activities of your campaign, but is often overlooked. Reviewing your progress at regular points will not only help to hold you and your partners accountable for planned actions, but will also reveal whether or not your actions are accomplishing your goals. If your campaign is not making progress, you'll need to reassess and adjust your plan.

13. Celebrate success and remain engaged

Successful advocacy campaigns take time. Even if you don't secure your policy change right away, you will have made progress in educating decision-makers, the media, and the public on your issue. Celebrate milestones both big and small, and make sure you thank supporters for their ongoing commitment. Once you have achieved your policy change, ensuring successful implementation is the next objective. A campaign doesn't end with the change in law or policy change: Now it's time to push for implementation

Advocacy Tools. (2019, August 20). <https://www.tobaccofreekids.org/advocacy-tools>

After No Menthol Sunday: Support

- Encourage tobacco users to call 1-800-Quit-Now. They can talk to a Quit Line coach who can help develop a plan for quitting. Callers may also receive free Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT).
- Get involved by spreading the word about the harms of menthol. This may be through social media or by continuing to provide our tools and information at your services.
- Build relationships with local officials who are interested in supporting the health marginalized communities. Ask them to support measures that are proven to reduce tobacco use such as restricting the sale of mentholated tobacco products within 500 feet of a school.
- Support congregants who want to quite tobacco with prayer and patience. Help members to reduce stress and find ways to join in on efforts to be healthier.
- Talk to youth about the importance of staying tobacco free and living out the values they believe in. Encourage them to check out the Fresh Empire campaign on Twitter.

If you have any additional questions or would like to start a community- wide movement, **visit www.centerforblackhealth.org**. Join The Center for Black Health & Equity's mailing list and follow us on Facebook and Twitter.