

Stop Flavors

Ending the sale of all flavored tobacco products, including menthol, is an important public health and social justice issue that will save lives, reduce health disparities, and protect kids throughout the state of Michigan.

This effort is supported by:



Big Tobacco's Now Frontier: OUR YOUTH



Big Tobacco is marketing products in kid-friendly flavors such as gummy bear, berry blend, chocolate, peach, cotton candy, strawberry, and grape. These flavors are particularly designated for e-cigarettes and cigars, as well as smokeless tobacco and hookah. And it's working:

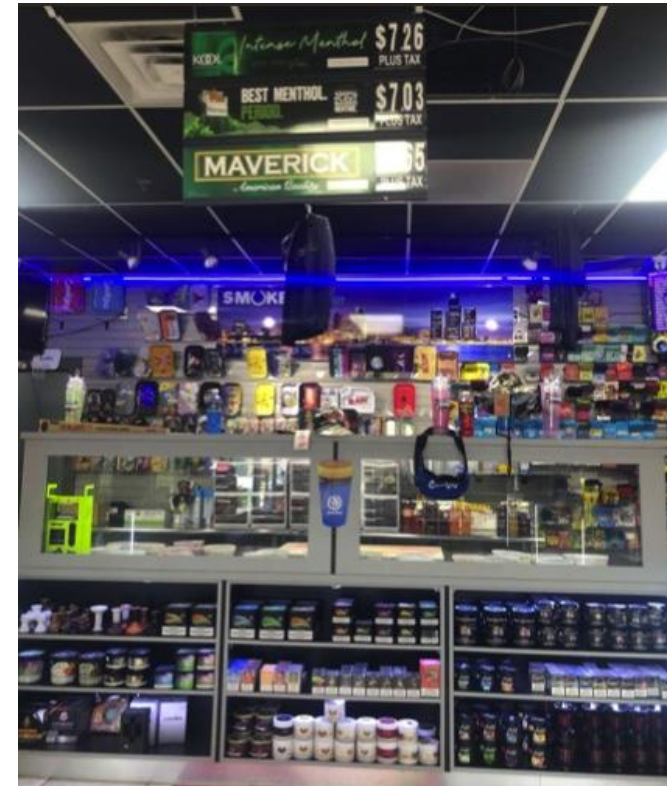
- Flavored tobacco products play a key role in enticing kids to a lifetime of addiction.
- **More than 2.5 million youth reported using e-cigarettes in 2022.**
- **Flavors: Nearly 85% of those youth used flavored e-cigarettes.**
- **Dependence: More than one in four of those youth used e-cigarettes daily.**
- Flavored tobacco packaging often resembles the candy it's usually displayed near in retail outlets.

Michigan Retailers & Targeting of Youth

Michigan tobacco retailers sell to kids at alarming rates — one of the highest in the country. Since tobacco retailers are not required to have a license in Michigan, it makes enforcement nearly impossible.

Tobacco retailer compliance check failure rates for sales to those under 21 years of age for 2022:

- Benton Harbor: 30%
- Grand Rapids: 30%
- Flint: 33%
- Pontiac: 40%
- Detroit: 65%



Why Big Tobacco Targets Children

Nearly all smokers began between the ages of 12 and 24



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Widespread access to flavored tobacco products and the degree to which **the industry aggressively markets to young people** are two main components of Big Tobacco's mission of targeting our youth for a lifetime of addiction.

Source: *Smoking and Tobacco Use Behavior Assessment Study of African Americans in Michigan-2020* by MDHHS Tobacco Control Program.

VAPING AT SCHOOL: The Tobacco Industry's Latest Scam



M[END]THOL

*LGBT Smokers are
36% more likely to get
Addicted*



WARNING: Menthol cigarettes are easier to smoke, but harder to quit, making you more susceptible to tobacco-related illnesses.

For 60 years,

The tobacco industry has deliberately and aggressively targeted Black communities with menthol ads to boost profits. Menthol is the most popular flavor among Black smokers, as it masks the harshness of tobacco, which allows users to smoke more while making it harder to quit.

60 Years Later:

- In the 1950s, Black people represented only 5 percent of menthol smokers; today it's 85 percent.
- More than 70,000 Black and Brown people are diagnosed with tobacco-related disease each year (Truth Initiative, 2020).
- Menthol cigarettes are the number one killer of Black people: 45,000 deaths each year.
- Now, women, youth, LGBTQ+, and people with behavioral health issues (depression, psychological distress) are using menthol at higher rates.
- 70 percent of smokers want to quit, but the addictive properties of menthol make it difficult to do so.

Retailers' Flavored Tobacco Promotions

A recent analysis of tobacco retailers throughout **Wayne** and **Kent Counties** found:

Outside of tobacco retailers, **cigarillos** were the most advertised product (**17.5% of stores between the two counties**). At **17.4%**, advertising of **menthol cigarettes** outside retail establishments was second.



Source: Menthol Tobacco Availability, Placement and Advertisement in Kent County and Wayne County; Karalyn Kiessling, MPH; University of Michigan School of Public Health.

Retailers' Flavored Tobacco Promotions

The same analysis of tobacco retailers throughout **Wayne** and **Kent Counties** also found:

Cigarettes were the most likely product to have a price promotion:

- 47.5% of stores had a menthol promotion
- 39% of stores had a special on regular tobacco products

Cigarillos were also part of retailers' price promotions throughout **Wayne** and **Kent Counties**:

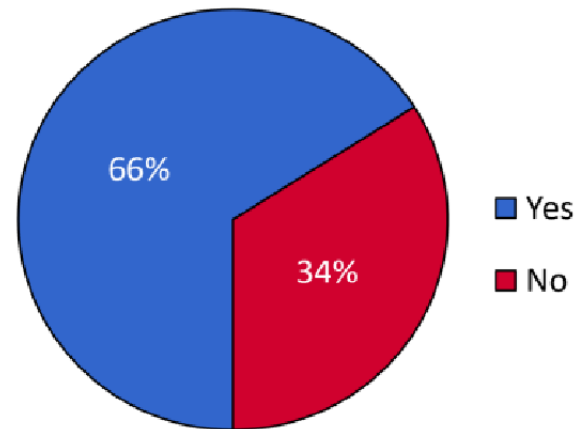
- 69.5% of stores sold single cigarillos
- 75.5% of stores sold cigarillos for less than \$1

MENTHOL-FLAVORED PRODUCTS: The “Gateway” Commodity

Two-thirds started smoking or using tobacco with menthols

Though this number is consistent across most demographics.

Started Smoking/Tobacco With Menthols



When you started using tobacco products, did you use Menthol flavored tobacco products?

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MICHIGAN IS ONE OF THE WORST STATES FOR TOBACCO CONTROL POLICIES

The American Lung Association's "State of Tobacco Control" 2023 report gave the state of Michigan mostly failing grades for tobacco control policies, making it one of the worst states in the nation to prevent and reduce tobacco use.

What follows is a snapshot of selected cities and counties that helped the state earn its failing grades:



Tobacco Remains A Problem In Michigan

FLINT & GENESEE COUNTY

- Genesee County 2023 adult smoking rate is **22.4%**, which is higher than Michigan's rate of **17%**
- Tobacco retailer compliance check **failure rates for sales to those in Flint under 21 years of age for 2022 is high at 33%**
- Genesee County's **smoking rate is higher than state and national averages**. Smoking is a significant risk factor for poorer health (e.g., pulmonary disease, cardiac disease, etc.) and higher health care costs. There are minimal smoking cessation resources in Genesee County and those that exist are underutilized.

Tobacco Remains A Problem In Michigan

PONTIAC & OAKLAND COUNTY

- Tobacco retailer compliance **check failure rates for sales to those in Pontiac under 21 years of age for 2022 is high at 40%**
- **24% of Pontiac's adults smoke** compared to an average of 16.2% across other Dashboard cities (City Health Dashboard 2019)
- In Oakland County, **3 in 10 pregnant women smoke** – higher than the state rate

Tobacco Remains A Problem In Michigan

JACKSON COUNTY

- 2023 Jackson County adult smoking rate: **25.8%**
- **19.8%** of pregnant women smoke (**10.6%** is the state average)
- Higher incidences of lung cancer in Jackson County than in Michigan and the U.S.
- Almost **30% of high school youth** have tried tobacco

Tobacco Remains A Problem In Michigan

Michigan lags behind in protecting kids and targeted communities from the dangers of nicotine and tobacco.

- The tobacco industry spends nearly \$300 million in Michigan each year to keep people addicted and to attract new, young customers.
- Tobacco use kills 16,200 Michiganders each year.
- Smoking-related annual health care costs: \$5.33 billion.
- High rates of youth vaping have erased decades of progress.
- Michigan tobacco retailers sell to kids at alarming rates — one of the highest in the country.
- Michigan tobacco retailers are not required to have a license, making enforcement nearly impossible.

TOBACCO NATION: An Ongoing Crisis

Michigan is one of 13 states that make up **TOBACCO NATION**: a collection of states with the worst health outcomes from tobacco use while also being home to a disproportionate share of adult smokers.

Those states also include: ALABAMA, ARKANSAS, INDIANA, KENTUCKY, LOUISIANA, MISSISSIPPI, MISSOURI, OHIO, OKLAHOMA, SOUTH CAROLINA, TENNESSEE, and WEST VIRGINIA

TOBACCO NATION CHARACTERISTICS:

- **Life Expectancy**: Tobacco Nation residents **live 3 years less** on average and are more likely to **die from cancer** than the rest of the U.S.
- **Health**: Tobacco Nation residents report more than **20% more “poor” physical and mental health days** than the average American.
- **Finances**: Tobacco Nation residents **earn nearly 25% less** per year than the rest of the U.S.
- **Youth Tobacco Use**: Compared to the 10 countries with the highest rates of tobacco use among youth, **Tobacco Nation ranks #5**.

Legislative Agenda: Comprehensive Approach

Flavored Tobacco Products Sales Ban

- Prohibition includes menthol cigarettes and flavored vapes

Tobacco Retail Licensing (TRL) Program

- Require a license to sell tobacco products
- Serves to decriminalize youth use (repeals PUP penalties)

Taxes on Tobacco Products

- Establish an excise tax on e-cigarettes and increase the tax on all tobacco products

Local Control

- Repeal state preemption laws; allow locals to regulate tobacco sales.

Stop Flavors

Sources

[Tobacco use in the African American community \(truthinitiative.org\)](http://truthinitiative.org)