

**From:** [Kelsey Romeo-Stuppy](#)  
**To:** [Megan Arendt](#)  
**Subject:** FW: MD Anderson response to FDA proposal to prohibit menthol cigarettes  
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**From:** smartalk-owner@smartalk.org <smartalk-owner@smartalk.org> **On Behalf Of** Cofer, Jennifer  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 29, 2021 11:01 AM  
**To:** smartalk@smartalk.org  
**Subject:** [SMARTalk] MD Anderson response to FDA proposal to prohibit menthol cigarettes

## MD Anderson response to FDA proposal to prohibit menthol cigarettes

HOUSTON — The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center strongly endorses the [Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\) plan](#) to prohibit menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars. The FDA prohibited the use of flavors in cigarettes in 2009, except for menthol. Today's historic decision will not immediately remove menthol cigarettes from the market but begins the process to do so in the coming years.

As part of our mission to eliminate cancer in Texas, the nation and the world, MD Anderson is committed to ending tobacco use, which accounts for up to 30% of all cancer-related deaths in the United States.

In 2019, menthol cigarette brands constituted [37%](#) of the cigarette market, an all-time high. More than 19.5 million people currently smoke menthol cigarettes, which have a disproportionate impact on minorities and young adults:

- [More than half](#) of youth smokers, including 70% of young Black users, smoke menthol cigarettes.
- Among adults, the vast majority ([85.8%](#)) of Black smokers use mentholated brands, compared to 46% of Hispanic smokers, 39% of Asian smokers and 28.7% of white smokers. //I fixed the link in this bullet//

“Removing menthol cigarettes from the market will profoundly impact cancer diagnoses and mortality and reduce cancer disparities,” said [Peter WT Pisters, M.D.](#), president of MD Anderson. “It will protect the health of some of our most vulnerable populations, who may decide to quit or not begin smoking as a result of this decision.”

Menthol flavor may reduce the harshness of cigarette smoke, but menthol cigarettes are not safer than non-menthol cigarettes. In fact, [studies have shown](#) that using menthol cigarettes increases addiction and reduces cessation attempts. Research suggests that using menthol cigarettes may make it harder to quit smoking, compared to non-menthol cigarettes.

[Quitting smoking](#) decreases the risk for cancer and other diseases, while improving overall health. Tobacco use is the top risk factor for lung cancer, which is the [second-most common](#) cancer and the leading cause of cancer death among Black men and women. Black men and women are more likely to be diagnosed with and die from cancer than any other racial group.

“Scientific evidence has consistently shown that menthol cigarettes have no health benefits and pose

substantial harm beyond non-menthol cigarettes,” said [Ernest Hawk, M.D.](#), division head and vice president of Cancer Prevention and Population Sciences at MD Anderson. “The FDA’s plan represents a significant step to improve public health, once the policies are enacted, ultimately reducing health disparities and advancing the elimination of cancer through effective tobacco control.”

MD Anderson offers free [community programs](#) to educate children and teens about the dangers of smoking and tobacco use, as well as [cessation studies](#) to help adults quit. Anyone seeking smoking cessation support can call the National Quitline at 1-800-QUIT-NOW.

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#### **About MD Anderson**

[The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center](#) in Houston ranks as one of the world's most respected centers focused on cancer patient care, research, education and prevention. The institution’s sole mission is to end cancer for patients and their families around the world. MD Anderson is one of only 51 comprehensive cancer centers designated by the National Cancer Institute (NCI). MD Anderson is ranked No.1 for cancer care in U.S. News & World Report’s “Best Hospitals” survey. It has ranked as one of the nation’s top two hospitals for cancer care since the survey began in 1990, and has ranked first 16 times in the last 19 years. MD Anderson receives a cancer center support grant from the NCI of the National Institutes of Health (P30 CA016672).

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