

The Honorable Robert M. Califf, MD
Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
10903 New Hampshire Avenue Building 32, Room 2346
Silver Spring, MD 20993

Re: FDA Proposed Rules on Ending the Sale of Menthol Cigarettes and Flavored Cigars

Dear Commissioner Califf:

We as physicians, nurses, pharmacists, public health professionals and other healthcare workers who are dedicated to protecting the lives of Americans, strongly urge you to finalize the two proposed rules to end the sale of both menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars.

As health professionals, we dedicate our lives to improving the health of our patients and our nation's public health. Menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars work in direct opposition to us reaching this goal. The U.S. Surgeon General has concluded that tobacco causes dozens of serious and potentially fatal diseases, including lung and heart diseases, cancer, diabetes and a myriad of other conditions. Tobacco claims more than 480,000 lives per year and for each of those lives lost, another 30 people live with a tobacco-caused disease. Finalizing these two rules would dramatically improve the health of many Americans and assist us in ensuring the well-being of our patients and the nation's public health are protected.

Menthol cigarettes are often the first cigarette youth and young adults try and can increase the chance they become regular users of cigarettes. Researchers have estimated that menthol cigarettes were responsible for 10 million more people who smoke and 378,000 additional smoking-related deaths between 1980-2018, or almost 10,000 deaths every year. Additional studies show hundreds of thousands of people who smoke menthol cigarettes would quit as a result of these products being removed from the marketplace, which would reduce disease and save lives.

Moreover, tobacco use disproportionately harms certain communities who are already at increased risk for health disparities. For decades, the tobacco industry has targeted Black Americans, LGBTQ and other communities with marketing for menthol cigarettes, a practice that continues today. More than four in five Black adults who smoke use menthol cigarettes, compared to just 29% of white adults who smoke. Additionally, people who smoke in the lesbian, gay and bisexual community also use menthol at higher rates compared to heterosexual people. We see these tragic disparities bear out in the patients we serve: tobacco use claims the lives of 45,000 Black Americans every year. Tobacco use is also a major contributor to three of the leading causes of death among Black Americans: heart disease, cancer and stroke.

There is a significant continuing toll on public health from menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars. The Food and Drug Administration has consistently maintained, since 2013, that prohibiting menthol as a characterizing flavor in cigarettes would promote public health. Flavored cigars pose a similar risk to public health and health equity: over 40 percent of current high schoolers who smoke cigars and nearly 60 percent of middle schoolers who smoke cigars use flavored cigars, and youth use of cigars among Black students is higher than their use of cigarettes.

We beseech you to finalize both rules this year and dramatically decrease the terrible toll tobacco use causes in the U.S. Now is the time to make a significant step towards improving the health of our patients and the entire nation by moving quickly to finalize these rules.

Sincerely,

The undersigned health professionals

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Scott	Lallier	DO
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Jai	Photavath	MD
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Susan	Rappaport	MPH
Michelle	Ratau	MD, MPH
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Mitchell	Grayson	MD
Lenora	Gregory	BSN, RN
Laura	Lucchesi	BSN, RN, CTTS
Karen	McCoy	MD
Bernadette	Melnyk	NP

Ohio

Rebecca	Parkhurst	CHES
Deborah	Patten	RCP, RRT
Elsira	Pina	DO
Emily	Reising	CHES, MPH
Susan	Savoia	BSN
Gillian	Solem	MSN, RN
David	Spanos	RN
Terry	Webb	CTTS, RRT
Lisa	Zalewski	BSN, RN

Oklahoma

Sean	Abbott	MD
Erin	Alward	MD
Tiffanie	Anderson	BSN, NP, MSN
Matt	Austin	DO
Paul	Benson	MD, MPH
Laili	Boozary	MSN
Darin	Brannan	MD, MPH
Thanh	Bui	DrPH, MD
Helen	Bumpus	MD
Robert	Couch	MD
Joy	Crandall	DO
Steven	Crawford	MD
Morgan	Davie	CTTS
Eileen	Fox-Biswell	DR
Colin	Fuller	MD
Amy	Gumuliauskas	MD
Kailey	Haley	DO
Jennifer	Koehler	BSN, RN, MPH
Michael	Koehler	MD
Greg	Krempl	MD
Wendy	Lawson	AE-C, RRT, MPH
Tara	Lynd	MD
James	Matheny	MPH
Kibwei	McKinney	MD
Blake	Morris	MD
Andra	Nuzum-Keim	MD
Sabrina	Olay	MD
Jason	Oliver	PhD
Lindsay	Owens	CHES
Melanie	Pearce Smith	DO
Carlie	Pearson	MD
Wendy	Peterson	PA-C
Maria de Lurdes	Queimado	MD
Santiago	Reyes	DR
Tara	Ross	MPH
Stephanie	Schofield	MD
Julie	Seward	RDH

Oklahoma

Laura	Shamblin	MD
Savannah	Stumph	DO
Dwight	Sublett	MD
Eve	Switzer	MD
Christina	Tiopy	MD
Peter	Vitiello	PhD
Cynthia	West	DO
Elizabeth	Wickersham	MD
Peter	Winn	DR
Don	Zetik	MD

Oregon

Maxine	Dexter	MD
Regan	Duffy	MD, MPH
Andrew	Janssen	MD
Vanessa	Mizak	NP
Erika	Moseson	MD
Caroline	Motika	MD
Jonathan	Rettmann	MD
Rachel	Sanborn	MD
Donald	Sullivan	MD
Holly	Vanni	MD
Eric	Walter	MD
Matthew	Walter	MD

Pennsylvania

Vida	Abedi	DR
Danish	Ahmad	MD
Sophia I.	Allen	PhD
Fern	Anari	MD
Jessica	Bauman	MD
Hossein	Borghaei	DO
Mav	Brar	MD
Deborah	Brown	CHES
Vernon	Chinchilli	DR
Pamela	Clarke	MSW
Donna	Edmondson	MSN
Elizabeth	Flaherty	MD
Jaclyn	Gleber	PhD, RDH
Lynn	Heyman	CTTS, RRT, NCTTP
Chelsey	Hildebrand	MPH
Jennifer	Hobbs Folkenroth	CTTS, NCTTP
Brian	Jenssen	MD
Denise	Johnson	RN
Julia	Judd	DO
Celestine	Koger	MPH
Sierra	Kohl	CHES

Pennsylvania

Carol	LaRegina	MS, CPH
Leixa	Molina	MPH
Susan	Morris	PA
Katie	O'Connor-Jenkins	MPH
Anthony	Olszanski	MD
Bijal	Parikh	PA-C
Alan	Peterson	MD
Siva	Ramachandran	MD
Anil	Rengan	MD
Brendan	Richter	MPH
Eric	Rothermel	CTTS
Rebecca	Rudd	MD
LaMia	Shaw	LSW, MPH
Rajiv	Shawan	MD
Dylan	Sherry	MD
Christopher	Tino	CRT, RRT
Gina	Trignani	RD
Lois	Walinchus	NCTTP, RRT
Emily	Walzer	MD
Jennifer	Winn	MD
Antoinette	Wozniak	MD
Debra	Youngfelt	CHES, CTTS
Nikitas	Zervanos	MD

Rhode Island

Daisy	Bassen	MD
Angela	Butler	RRT
Elisabeth	Butler	NP
Mary	Byrd	PhD, RN
Ione	Cabassa	CRT, CTTS
Rachel	Cassidy	PhD
Patricia	Cioe	PhD, NP
Mary	Clark	MPH
Suzanne	Colby	PhD
Joanne	Costello	MPH, RN, PhD
Nicholas	Crowninshield	RN
Gail	Davis	BSN, RN, MSN
Justin	DiLibero	DNP, RN
Daniel	Fitzgerald	MPH
Kate	Guthrie	PhD
Allison	Heinly	MD
Christopher	Kahler	PhD
Lori	Kasher	DNP
Hina	Khan	MD
Aditya	Khanna	PhD
Virginia	Lemay	PharmD

Rhode Island

Margaret	Mann	RRT
Jennifer	Merrill	PhD
Madeline	Montgomery	MPH
Victoria	Ogunleye	RN
Siobhan	Perks	MPH
Sylvia	Ross	PhD
Nfn	Scout	PhD
Valeria	Tierney	RRT
Michelle	Veras	MPH
Donna	Villano	CRT, RRT
Kristen	Westmoreland	MD, MPH

South Carolina

Greg	Barabell	MD
Terrence	Steyer	MD

South Dakota

Darcy	Ellefson	AE-C, RRT
Aaron	Hunt	MPH, PhD
Cori	Jacobson	MPH
Shelby	Kommes	MPH

Tennessee

Shelby	Kommes	MPH
Fahad	Alharthi	RRT
Laleh	Bahrami	MD
Rebecca	Baker	BSN
Richard	Crume	MPH
Anthony	DeLucia	PhD
Susan	Garwood	MD
Richard	Henighan	NP
Mallory	Higginbotham	RT
Darius	Hollings	MD
John	Howington	MD
Jeffrey	Kulas	MSN, RN
William	Lawson	MD
Kathy	Leiser	PA
Candace	Partee	RRT
Bradley	Richmond	MD, PhD

Texas

Folashade	Afolabi	MD
Jonnae	Atkinson	MD
Eric	Bernicker	MD
Sarah	Bindner	PA-C
Elizabeth	Bosquez	MD
Maggie	Britton	PhD
Jennifer	Cofer	CHES, MPH
Michael	Davis	MPH
Lisa	Doggett	MD, MPH
Kelli	Drenner	PhD
Joel	Dunnington	MD
Don	Gentry	DDS
Gary	Goodnight	DO
Ann	Gotschall	MD
Rebecca	Harkleroad	RN
Jeannine	Hatt	MD
Melissa	Holland	RN
Paul	Klotman	MD
Alicia	Kowalchuk	DO
Rupali	Kumar	MD
Bryce	Kyburz	CTTS
Annette	Lerma	MPH
Francis	Luna	RN
David	Lundy-Weiss	MD, MPH
Hammad	Mahmood	MD
Patrick	McColloster	MD
Lindy	McGee	MD
Shimarah	Mehrotra	MPH
Matia	Mejia	MD, MPH
Hannah	Mesa	MPH
Teresa	Mitchell-Monroe	BSN, RN
Maria	Monge	MD
Janet	Newcomb	RN
Susan	Parker	MPH
Yasmeen	Quadri	MD
Kira	Swensen	MPH
Adriana	Rangel	MPH, RRT
Lorraine	Reitzel	PhD
Veronica	Torres	MD
Elizabeth	Tran	MD
Suzanne	Trapani	BSN, RN
Michelle	Varon	PhD
Ritupreet	Virk	MPH
Desmar	Walkes	MD
Katherine	Wells	MPH
Alyssa	Western	MPH
Tiffany	Winter	MPH
Elizabeth	Yett	CTTS, PharmD

Utah

Kristen	Ameel	MD
Gabriel	Glissmeyer	MPH
Tammy	Stucki	RRT
Megan	Washburn	RCP
Josh	West	MPH

Vermont

Lisa V.	Adams	MD
Gilman	Allen, III	MD
Laura	Beidler	MPH
Catherine	Brady	RRT
Anne	Dixon	MD
David	Kaminsky	MD
Pat	McLaine	DrPH, RN, MPH
Katherine	Menson	DO
Renee	Stapleton	MD, PhD
Sarah	Wagner	NP
Zachary	Weintraub	MD

Virginia

Laura	Anderko	PhD, RN
Chavalía	Breece	NP
Ranjana	Caple	MPH
Neely	Dahl	MPH
Paul	Harrell	PhD
Linda	Hudgens	RN
Barbara	Kaplan	MPH
Sunita	Krishnan	MPH
Amit	Mahajan	MD
William	McAveney	MD
Bonnie	McQuaid	AE-C, RRT
Sarah	Parnapy Jawaid	PharmD
Jerome	Paulson	MD
Kathleen	Price	MD
Richard	Rosenthal	MD
Lois	Rowland	RRT
Leon	Vinci	MPH

Washington

Rebecca	Green	MPH
Mithya	Lewis-Newby	MD
Meghan	McCullers	MD
Kathryn	Pearce	CTTS, PharmD
Joan	Roberts	MD

West Virginia

Jeffrey	Coben	MD
Timothy	Lefeber	MD
Susan	Morgan	DDS
Madonna	Wilson	RRT

Wisconsin

Sreevalli	Atluru	MD
Karina	Atwell	MD, MPH
Jay	Balachandran	MD
Vivek	Balasubramaniam	MD
Kelsey	Baubie	MPH
Adam	Bauer	MD
Nicole	Baumann-Blackmore	MD
Leonelo	Bautista	MD, MPH, DrPH
Mark	Beamsley	MD
Ann	Behrmann	MD
Mahima	Bhattar	MPH Student
Melanie	Biegler	DO
Andre	Biscaye	MD
Nicole	Bonk	MD
Alyssa	Bruehlman	MD
Sarah	Brundidge	AE-C, RRT, RCP
Bobbi	Burgess	EMT
Kalley	Carlson	BA
Sabeena	Cheema	MPH, PA-C
Lindsey	Christianson	Student
Sarah	Clifford	MPH
Dominic	Co	MD
Paige	Condit	MD
James	Conway	MD
Anna	Corey	MD
Allison	Couture	DO
Jessica	Dalby	MD
Cara	Damico Smith	MPH
Malcolm	DeCamp	MD
Daniel	Deuel	M.Ed.
Carol	Diamond	MD
Ann	Dodge	CPNP
Amy	Dresen	BS
Megan	Dudek	DO
Jennifer	Edgoose	MD
Corinne	Engelman	MPH, PhD
Lauren	Fetsko	DO
Ginny	Fricke	RN

Wisconsin

Madeline	Gallo	MPH, PharmD
Anthony	Garcia-Prats	MD
Debra	Gatzke	MSN
James	Gern	MD
Robert	Golden	MD
Amanda	Goplen	MSN, NP, RN
Elizabeth	Gore	MD
Leann	Greuel	PA-C
Victoria	Griebel	RN
Emile	Gunovich	MPH
Pamela	Guthman	BSN, RN, DNP
Joan	Hamblin	MD
Matthew	Harer	MD
Cecilia	He	MPH
William	Heifner	MD
Korina	Hendricks	MPH
Gabby	Henshue	MPAS/MPH Candidate
Joel	Hill	PA-C
Sarah	Hohl	MPH, PhD
John	Hokanson	MD
Margo	Hoover-Regan	MD
Laura	Houser	MD
Jeff	Huebner	MD
Sarah	James	DO
Sheri	Johnson	PhD
Tatiana	Kaun	MPA
Savanna	Kiefer	MPH
Julie	Kirsch	PhD
Bruce	Klein	MD
Rachel	Klos	DVM, MPH
Ashley	Knobeloch	BSN, RN, MPH
Kjersti	Knox	MD
Erin	Krause	RN
Bruce	Krawisz	MD
Kane	Laks	MD
Janet	Legare	MD
Stacy	Leidel	NP
Russell	Lemmon	DO
Morgan	Lentz	Medical Student
Allison	Lindell	MD
Randolph	Lipchik	CRS, MSN, MPH
Jennifer	Lochner	MD

Wisconsin

Rachel	Loduha	MSN
Alyssa	Lovergine	MPH, PA-C
Todd	Mahr	MD
Kendra	Maier	MPH, JD, MS
Andrea	Martonffy	MD
Mala	Mathur	MD, MPH
Elizabeth	McBride	MD
Kelly	McGinm	BSN, MPH, RN
Keelin	McHugh	BA
Amanda	McIntyre	MD
Michelle	Mercure	CHES, CTTS
Julie	Mitchell	MD
Lauren	Mixtacki	MD
Kimberly	Mueller	MSN, RN
Kirstin	Nackers	MD
Nivedita	Nair	MD
Dipesh	Navsaria	MD, MPH
Paul	Neary	MD
Grace	Nichols	MPH Student
Tristan	O'Driscoll	MPH, PharmD
Samantha	Pabich	MD, MPH
Jane	Pearson	MD
Amy	Peterson	MD
Nanette	Peterson	MSN, RN
Bradley	Pfeifer	MD
David	Rakel	MD
John	Ralphe	MD
Sima	Ramratnan	MD, MPH
Caitlin	Regner	MD
Nancy	Rhodes	BSN
Melissa	Ricker	MD
Kirsten	Rindfleisch	MD
Michael	Rock	MD
Regina	Rosa	MD
Kathy	Rozema	MSN, NP
Emily	Ruedinger	MD, MEd
Nasia	Safdar	MD
Rhianna	Schmidt	CHES, MPH
Kathryn	Schmit	MD, MPH
Sarah	Schumacher	MSN, RD
Monica	Sciortino	MPH
Shelly	Shaw	MPH
Melissa	Sheth	DVM, MPH Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist/
Emily	Simmerman	MS
Beth	Smith	MD

Wisconsin

Beth	Smith	MD
Paul	Sondel	MD
Madison	Soukup	MPH
Sara	Suing	PA-C
Kathleen	Sweeney	DNP
Anusha	Talwalkar	EMT
Caroline	Templeton	RN
Jonathan	Temte	MD
Keith	Torgerud	RRT
Katie	Tredinnick	DVM, MPH student
Elias	Tsarovsky	BS
Samantha	Tyler	DO
Hannah	Wallenkamp	CHES
Matthew	Walsh	MPH, PhD
Aimée	Wattiaux	MD, MPH
Robyn	Wise	BSN, RN
Madison	Wynn	MPH
Megan	Yanny	MD

Wyoming

Polly	Davis	MD
Sarah	Gregory	MD
James	Wyssmann	PhD