



ASAM American Society of
Addiction Medicine

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**ASAM Applauds the Biden-Harris Administration for its Commitment to
Ban Menthol Cigarettes and Flavored Cigars**

ASAM urges FDA to propose and finalize regulations expeditiously to implement this bold proposal that will protect youth against tobacco use initiation, reduce health disparities, and save lives

Rockville, MD – Today the [American Society of Addiction Medicine](#) (ASAM) applauds the Biden-Harris Administration for its historic [commitment](#) to issue rules to ban menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars. Such regulations, when finalized, will help protect public health, reduce health disparities, and save lives.

Menthol cools and numbs the throat and masks the harshness of tobacco smoke, which makes it easier for youth to start smoking and eventually become addicted. Menthol cigarettes also disproportionately harm the health of Black Americans and exacerbate health disparities. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and its Tobacco Products Scientific Advisory Committee have repeatedly concluded that eliminating menthol cigarettes would benefit public health in the United States, especially among Black Americans. [Evidence from Canada](#) shows a menthol ban led to a significant increase in smoking cessation, with more successful quit attempts and lower rates of relapse to smoking, exemplifying potential benefits of a similar policy in the U.S.

“ASAM strongly supports these evidence-based policy proposals and looks forward to their swift implementation. It is unconscionable that previous sales restrictions on flavored tobacco products have excluded menthol, which is aggressively marketed to and disproportionately used by Black Americans,” said ASAM president William F. Haning, III, MD, DLFAPA, DFASAM. “In essence, we have prioritized tobacco company profits over the health of Black people, and that must stop. ASAM urges FDA to propose, finalize and implement these rules as soon as possible.”

ASAM has [long advocated](#) for the elimination of characterizing flavors in tobacco products, unless a flavor has been demonstrated to help current tobacco users to stop smoking, will not lead non-tobacco users to start, and does not increase risk of harm from using the product. The scientific evidence is clear that menthol not only facilitates smoking initiation, but also makes smoking cessation more difficult. In

fact, a [recent study](#) estimated that, from 1980 to 2018, menthol cigarettes were responsible for 10.1 million extra smokers, 378,000 premature deaths and 3 million life years lost in the U.S.

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About the American Society of Addiction Medicine

The American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), founded in 1954, is a professional medical society representing over 6,600 physicians, clinicians and associated professionals in the field of addiction medicine. ASAM is dedicated to increasing access and improving the quality of addiction treatment, educating physicians and the public, supporting research and prevention and promoting the appropriate role of physicians in the care of patients with addiction. For more information, visit www.ASAM.org.