Menthol LTE Template for January 2019

Drafted December 12, 2018

**E-cigarettes are a concern, but let’s not forget about Menthol in 2019**

Dear Editor,

START BY OBSERVING THAT OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS, MUCH OF THE MEDIA COVERAGE RELATED TO TOBACCO HAS FOCUSED ON E-CIGARETTES AND THEIR INCREASED USE BY TEENS. SHARE THAT THE CONCERN IS WARRANTED, GIVEN THE RISE IN FLASH DRIVE LOOK-A-LIKE PRODUCTS LIKE JUUL AND THE SHARP INCREASE IN YOUTH E-CIGARETTE USE, BUT NOTE THAT WE SHOULDN’T GET COMPLACENT ABOUT OTHER TOBACCO PRODUCTS – ESPECIALLY MENTHOL CIGARETTES.

SHARE THAT MENTHOL IS THE ONLY FLAVORING STILL ALLOWED IN CIGARETTES. ALSO TALK ABOUT HOW SMOKING MENTHOLS MAKES IT EASIER TO START AND HARDER TO QUIT (**YOU CAN FIND A GOOD EXPLANATION IN THE FIRST PARAGRAPH OF THIS FACT SHEET --** [**https://truthinitiative.org/news/truth-about-menthol**](https://truthinitiative.org/news/truth-about-menthol)). DISCUSS THE IMPORTANCE OF ADDRESSING MENTHOL ALONGSIDE OTHER FLAVORED TOBACCO PRODUCTS.

DETAIL THE TOLL THAT MENTHOL TAKES ON AFRICAN AMERICANS USING EXAMPLES FROM THE DISPARITIES TOOLKIT ON TOBWIS ([**https://tobwis.org/toolkits/disparities/african-american/**](https://tobwis.org/toolkits/disparities/african-american/)). MENTION THAT TOBACCO COMPANIES PROMOTE MENTHOL TOBACCO PRODUCTS HEAVILY IN AFRICAN AMERICAN COMMUNITIES. ([**http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/smoking-facts/tobacco-industry-marketing.html**](http://www.lung.org/stop-smoking/smoking-facts/tobacco-industry-marketing.html)**, https://truthinitiative.org/news/nomentholmondays-targeted-marketing-menthols-and-african-american-history**).

REMIND READERS THAT MARKETING EXPOSURE AND PERCEIVED DISCRIMMINATION DRIVE SMOKING RATES. LET READERS KNOW THAT IF THEY’RE CONCERNED ABOUT SPECIFIC GROUPS BEING TARGETED BY TOBACCO COMPANIES AND THOSE GROUPS HAVING HIGHER RISK FOR NEGATIVE HEALTH OUTCOMES, THEY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY CONTACTING THE (**NETWORK/COALITION NAME**) AT (**URL, SOCIAL MEDIA, ETC.**). CLOSE WITH AN UPLIFTING SENTENCE ABOUT THE POWER OF COLLECTIVE ACTION TO MAKE CHANGE, ESPECIALLY IN COMMUNITIES WITH HIGH MENTHOL TOBACCO USE RATES.