

Success Story



Date Submitted:

1/31/2023

County/Area/Tribe:

Douglas

Goal Area:

- ☐ Cessation
- ☒ Disparate Populations
- ☐ Secondhand Smoke Exposure
- ☒ Youth Prevention

Individuals/Target Audience:
(who this happened to)

Primary audience was metro Omaha area residents; secondary audience was other individuals that read the Omaha World Herald

Setting:
(Where and when this took place)

Letter to the editor submission to the Omaha World Herald in July/August 2022

Conflict:
(obstacle, barrier or problem)

Menthol, a chemical compound found naturally in peppermint and other similar plants, has a minty, cooling nature that makes it easier for people to begin smoking, easier to inhale smoke more deeply into the lungs — and harder to quit.

For decades, tobacco companies have heavily advertised menthol cigarettes in Black communities, promoting the addictive, dangerous product through Black publications and celebrities. A 2007 study found that smoking-related advertisements were more highly concentrated in Black communities compared to their white counterparts.

Action:
(what happened)

Staff from the American Lung Association crafted a letter to the editor to highlight the impact of menthol cigarettes and express hope for the FDA's decision to prohibit the manufacture and sale of menthol products. The letter to the editor was sent to local publications and was published in the Public Pulse section of the Omaha World-Herald.

Outcome(s):
(measurable or concrete evidence of change)

Though the letter did not receive direct feedback, the newspaper has substantial reach in the community and in Eastern Nebraska. This was an opportunity to educate the community on the issue and bring attention to our initiative. Given that the letter was published in a respected newspaper, we can continue to utilize it in social media posts, presentations, and outreach efforts to bolster our credibility with audiences.

Link to the op-ed in the Omaha World Herald: https://omaha.com/opinion/columnists/midlands-voices-a-ban-on-menthol-cigarettes-can-help-save-the-lives-of-black-americans/article_90a83f92-11ae-11ed-847b-9b6f1f3f126e.html

Relevance:
(how this story helps us demonstrate need or measure success)

This is relevant to MOTAC's menthol and other tobacco flavors Initiative in the following ways:

1. It was one way to educate the local community on the harms of menthol
2. It was also a way to educate the local community on what they can do to get involved