

## 2018 District Days

# KEY MESSAGES INTERNAL TALKING POINTS

### Not for Distribution

Use these talking points to guide your District Days' legislative meetings. These talking points should be used in conjunction with the Key Message document and below are suggestions for tailoring your message to the work you are doing in your community.

## Key Message Talking Points

We're here today as part of *(insert local tobacco control coalition name here)* to share how local leaders can rise to the challenge of protecting their communities from the harms of tobacco.

**KEY MESSAGE: One of these things just doesn't belong.**

Big Tobacco is targeting youth by using flavored tobacco products that are named after popular candy and soda. Sometimes these products are so strategically designed that it is difficult to determine if a product is candy or if it is a tobacco product.



### **KEY MESSAGE: Why is flavored tobacco an issue?**



- Flavors, especially candy and fruit flavors, play a role in influencing tobacco use or experimentation in youth and young adults. 80% of youth who have ever tried tobacco started with a flavored tobacco product.
- To entice youth to purchase different flavored products, the tobacco industry uses brightly colored packaging and often sells the products individually or in smaller pack sizes to make the product cheaper and more appealing.



- Since the flavored products smell and taste so sweet, and resemble their favorite candy, youth and young adults believe these products are less harmful, which is one of the reasons youth and young adults use flavored products.
- *Come prepared to inform your legislator about how local communities have addressed the sale of flavored tobacco products.*
- *Look up local data from Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community survey to highlight the number of stores selling flavored tobacco products in your community and come prepared to share it with the legislator.*
- *Bring photos of flavored tobacco products from retailers in your community.*

## KEY MESSAGE: Flavors target specific communities.

The tobacco industry not only uses flavors to target youth, but also to target specific communities, such as the African American community and the LGBTQ community.



- African Americans usually smoke fewer cigarettes but start at a much older age, which makes them more likely to die from smoking related diseases than other communities. Among the African American community, heart disease, cancer and stroke are three major contributors of death, due in part to use of tobacco.
- With the cool minty taste that is produced by menthol, this helps to cover up the harshness, and makes it easier to smoke. Menthol makes the cigarette more addictive.
- African Americans have the highest menthol usage at 71.5% while menthol is also preferred over traditional cigarettes by 53% of the LGBTQ

community.

- The tobacco industry targets the African American community by supporting cultural events and making contributions to minority higher education institutions, elected officials, civic and community organizations, and scholarship programs.
- Cigarette smoking among the lesbian, gay and bisexual community in the U.S. is higher than among heterosexual/straight individuals. Tobacco companies aggressively market to the LGBTQ community by sponsoring events, bar promotions, giveaways and advertisements.
- Research suggests that smoking is so prevalent in the LGBTQ community due to advertisements that portray smoking as an escape from their unique pressures of everyday life.

## THE ASK:

*Come prepared with a local ask. Ask your legislator to support work to reduce the impact of flavored tobacco products in your community. Encourage them to host a legislative briefing, speak with local residents about the impact of flavored tobacco, attend a local coalition meeting or event, or participate in a photo or art contest on flavored products hosted by youth in your community.*