

On June 1, 2020, flavored tobacco products will no longer be available for purchase in Massachusetts stores.

Partner Spotlight: Abundant Life Church

NO MENTHOL. KNOW WHY.



On June 1, 2020 flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes (like Kool, Newport, and menthol Pall Mall) and flavored little cigars will no longer be sold in Massachusetts stores. This means there will be no more flavored tobacco products sold at retailers like corner stores, gas stations, and smoke shops.

The **No Menthol. Know Why.** Campaign is excited to highlight one of our partner organizations, **Abundant Life Church (ALC)**, a vibrant, multi-ethnic, multi-generational congregation in Cambridge, MA led by Bishop Lawrence Ward and Rev. Dr. Virginia Ward. Last week, in collaboration with the Campaign, ALC hosted two virtual events.

On Tuesday, ALC streamed the short documentary Black Lives/Black Lungs and then facilitated a conversation and Q&A about the history of the racist tobacco industry targeting, and the effects of flavored tobacco use in their community. Over twenty-five people joined the discussion and asked thought-provoking questions about tobacco addiction, cessation, industry targeting, and ways to support young people.

On Sunday, ALC hosted their first No Menthol Sunday event as a part of their monthly coffee hour focused on holistic health and coping during COVID-19. Nearly thirty people join the coffee hour where they watched a pre-recorded interview with a congregant, Valentino Robinson. Valentino shared a powerful and vulnerable story about his experiences with tobacco and his quit journey. Valentino is a lifelong resident of Cambridge who immigrated from Panama as a child. As a teenager, a tobacco company gave him free menthol cigarettes while he was walking through Central Square. The free cigarettes were the start of his life-long addiction to tobacco products. Passing out free products was a key tactic that tobacco industry used to target youth of color in urban settings like Valentino.

During Sunday's event, congregants asked Valentino about challenges in his quit journey, why he chose a particular cessation medication, and the role his faith plays in quitting tobacco products. Edgar Duran, Tamika Francis, and Lauren Ansong from the No Menthol. Know Why. team joined the conversation and shared resources available to support folks who want to quit using tobacco products.

Both of ALC's virtual events were powerful opportunities for participants to receive important information about tobacco, the implementation of the new law, and to show support and compassion for members of their community that are on their journey to quit. Community, faith, and family are strong motivators that can help support someone on their quit journey.

Thank you to Abundant Life Church for your partnership!

Other Campaign Updates:

Please join us for a webinar on Thursday, May 21, 2020 at 4PM EST to learn more about our new campaign – No Menthol. Know Why. – and how you can help spread the word in your community about the new law. Click [HERE](#) to register.

Email nomentholknowwhy@hria.org if you have questions, want to share your story, or would like to identify ways to partner with the campaign.

Best,
The **No Menthol. Know Why.** Team at Health Resources in Action