

FDA Submits Final Rule to Ban Menthol Cigarettes, Flavored Cigars

A ban on menthol cigarettes and flavored cigars could save 650,000 lives in 40 years, notably in the Black community.

November 1, 2023 By Laura Schmidt

The [Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) reached the final step in a process that would allow it to ban menthol [cigarettes](#) and flavored cigars, an idea the FDA has explored for more than a decade, [according to CNN](#).

Specifically, the FDA recently sent [final rules](#) regarding the ban to the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to review. Once implemented, the ban could potentially save hundreds of thousands of lives, health advocates say.

“Once implemented, they will protect kids from tobacco addiction, advance health equity and save hundreds of thousands of lives, especially Black lives,” said Yolonda Richardson, president and CEO of Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, to [CNN](#).

“Finalizing these two product standards remains a top priority for the FDA. The posting of both rules on the OMB website means they have reached the final step of review for regulatory documents,” added Brian King, PhD, MPH, director of the FDA’s Center for Tobacco Products.

Erika Sward, assistant vice president of national advocacy with the American Lung Association (ALA) told CNN that the review is “a big, vital and critical step on the way to banning these products.”

The ALA and many other organizations, including the Congressional Black Caucus and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, have urged the OMB to expedite the review, which could institute the by the end of the year.

Over the summer, 32 members of the Congressional Black Caucus sent a [letter](#) to FDA commissioner Robert Califf, MD, [urging the FDA](#) to finalize the proposed rule to remove menthol flavor from cigarettes.

The letter states: “For too long, tobacco companies have been enabled to promote menthol cigarettes to the Black community, preying particularly on Black youth. We urge the FDA to

continue to follow the science and move swiftly to implement the ban and remove these harmful products from the market without further delay.”

More than [half of children](#) who smoke use menthol cigarettes, according to a study published by the [National Library of Medicine](#). What’s more, children who smoked menthol cigarettes were more likely to become regular smokers. Another [study published last year](#) found that banning menthol cigarettes could save more than 650,000 lives in the United States within 40 years.

Sward said tobacco companies will likely ramp up their efforts to slow or stop the ban.

“It’s a big deal for them because it is how they attract and sustain people’s addiction,” she said. “So if this stands, they will have lost a major tool that they’ve used to addict and sustain an addiction for millions of people.”

To read more, click [#Cigarettes](#) or [#Food and Drug Administration](#). There, you’ll find headlines such as “[More Than 2.5M Youth Report Using E-Cigarettes This Year](#),” “[FDA Proposes Ban on Hair Relaxers With Formaldehyde](#)” and “[Earlier Smoking Cessation May Improve Lung Cancer Survival](#).”