

**WORKING AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL
TO REDUCE TOBACCO'S BURDEN:**

JOIN A SUBCOMMITTEE

While the prevalence of tobacco use has declined, not all populations have experienced similar gains or are equally protected by laws, policies, and resources intended to reduce tobacco use and tobacco-related harm.

This is no coincidence, as tobacco is not an equal opportunity killer. The tobacco industry strategically targets its deadly products in underserved communities and as a result, certain groups are exposed to more point-of-sale advertising, live in places with greater concentrations of tobacco retailers, and subsequently have a higher prevalence of tobacco use. Addressing these inequities at a grassroots level requires the engagement of a vibrant network that includes individuals from impacted populations, stakeholders, elected officials, and others committed to improving health outcomes for African Americans and those living in poverty. Guiding those efforts locally are our three subcommittees: Menthol Subcommittee, Smoke-Free Housing Subcommittee, and the Health Equity and Social Justice Subcommittee.

Menthol Subcommittee

Co-chairs: Oby Nwabuzor, American Heart Association and Fauzia Qureshi, Unite Wisconsin



Smoking kills 45,000 African Americans a year and is a major contributor to their leading causes of death: heart disease, diabetes and cancer. The most commonly used tobacco product among African Americans is menthol cigarettes. In fact, 9 out of 10 Black smokers in Wisconsin smoke menthol cigarettes, compared to 4 in 10 white smokers. This subcommittee of the Wisconsin African American Tobacco Prevention Network is charged with raising community awareness on issues related to menthol, and leading efforts related to No Menthol Sunday, a faith-based national day of advocacy. This subcommittee is also working to dispel harmful false narratives, pushed by the tobacco industry through covert methods, about how action to prohibit the sale of menthol products would be detrimental to Black health, when the truth is that the product has contributed to the deaths of millions.

Smoke-Free Housing Subcommittee and COVID Workgroup

SFH Co-Chairs: Angela Lawson and LaDonna Foster, Westlawn public housing residents



COVID workgroup Co-Chairs: Carol Lucas, Student Services at Milwaukee Area Technical College and Allison Gorrilla, UW-Center for Tobacco Research and Intervention

In July 2018 HUD enacted a smoke-free policy to protect public housing residents nationwide from secondhand smoke. The policy impacted 18,000 Wisconsin households, the majority here in Milwaukee. The WAATPN has partnered with the Housing Authority of the City of Milwaukee (HACM), Milwaukee Health Department, American Lung Association and residents, to support the implementation of the smoke-free rule, support research, increase access to on-site cessation programming, and provide tobacco prevention and COVID-19 information. This subcommittee is leading efforts aimed at improving health outcomes and quality of life for public housing residents in Milwaukee.

Health Equity and Social Justice Subcommittee

CO-CHAIRS Johnel Morris, resident of the City of Milwaukee. Currently recruiting a 2nd Co-Chair



It is urgent that we confront the targeting of communities by tobacco companies and the criminalization of commercial tobacco in order to promote racial equity and social justice. The goal of the Health Equity and Social Justice workgroup is to address and raise awareness on root causes of inequities related to tobacco in Milwaukee and push for change. Issues of focus include Tobacco Retailer Density, which studies have shown has a direct correlation with higher smoking rates and youth initiation, and the sale of single cigarettes, which exploit low-income communities and increase youth exposure to tobacco. The subcommittee is also developing and implementing an action plan to address findings from the Tobacco Retailer Density Study, the Wisconsin Retailer Assessment Project, and to expand the No Singles/No Loosies Campaign, among other initiatives that address health equity and social justice issues related to tobacco.