

No Menthol
SUNDAY

BOLD AWARENESS:
A FIGHT TO THE FINISH

Sunday, May 15, 2022



The Center for Black Health & Equity
Faith-based Initiatives
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THE CENTER FOR
BLACK HEALTH & EQUITY

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BOLD AWARENESS:

A FIGHT TO THE FINISH

The Center for Black Health & Equity's No Menthol Sunday is an annual opportunity to engage faith communities in tough conversations about how menthol and tobacco addiction have robbed us of community health for generations. The tobacco industry has stripped our community's finances, engaged in targeted unethical marketing, and attempted to dupe young people with flavors like spearmint and menthol. Their industry execs have once said that they don't smoke their own deadly products -- they reserve that right for "the young, the poor, the Black and stupid."

Those are fighting words.

Now, after a decades-long battle for health justice in tobacco control, we are embarking upon a major win. In 2022, we anticipate that the Food & Drug Administration will finally issue standard regulations that will prohibit the sale of tobacco products with any characterizing flavors like menthol. This is historic! Just as it was written in Isaiah 55:11, we are now seeing the fulfillment of what we had long set out to accomplish!

It's time for final round intensity.

While we expect total victory, we know we can also expect opposition from every side. That means we must prepare for a bare knuckle final fight to the finish. No longer will we stand for shallow arguments or the social systems that have perpetuated health disparities and kept tobacco use at status quo.

Faith communities can secure support within their congregations by ensuring they understand the benefits of this needed policy change. We've got to be bolder and more confident than ever in our efforts to raise awareness. This will require fearless determination and final round intensity.

Use No Menthol Sunday 2022 to trample the opposition. This toolkit will equip participants with strategies and talking points to be bold in this final fight against tobacco. Decades of work are now coming to fruition and we must maintain momentum until it is accomplished. Don't be afraid to get in the ring, we've already won.

“

SO SHALL MY WORD BE THAT GOES

OUT FROM MY MOUTH.

IT SHALL NOT RETURN TO ME EMPTY. BUT IT SHALL

ACCOMPLISH

THAT WHICH I PURPOSE, AND SHALL

SUCCEED

IN THE THING FOR WHICH I SENT IT.

- ISAIAH 55:11

No Menthol
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#NMS2022

MENTHOL FACTS

Menthol is a minty flavor that makes it easier to start smoking and harder to quit.

- Most African American smokers smoke menthols (85%).
- Most minorities who are smokers smoke menthols.
- Most kids who start smoking try menthols first.
- Smoking is still the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S.

The menthol issue is a social justice issue.

- The tobacco industry intentionally tries to get African Americans to buy mentholated tobacco products offering discounts, and placing more (and larger) advertisements for menthols in Black communities.
- The tobacco industry pays many Black political leaders, and sponsors HBCUs, festivals, Black-owned newspapers and other prominent civil rights organizations.
- Improving health outcomes for African Americans will require leaders to tear down the racial and social systems that have kept the tobacco industry in charge.

The FDA has the power to ban menthol from tobacco products, and on April 29, 2021, committed to issuing a new standard that would ban menthol as a characterizing flavor in cigarettes and cigars.

- A menthol ban on cigarettes would help reduce addiction and youth experimentation.
- A menthol ban will lead smokers to quit and improve quit attempts.
- A menthol ban will help address tobacco-related health disparities.

The tobacco industry pays Black leaders to say that a ban on menthol would criminalize African Americans, but this is not true.

- A menthol ban would prohibit people from manufacturing, distributing and selling menthols, NOT possessing them.

OUR POSITION ON MENTHOL

Tobacco-related illness is still the primary cause of death for African Americans. It is commonly known that menthol makes smoking easier to start and harder to quit. This is no exception for African Americans who consistently report more quit attempts than the general smoking population, yet experience lower success rates. Because more than 85% of African American smokers prefer menthols (as compared to 30% of Caucasian smokers), particular attention should be given to the elimination of mentholated tobacco products.



The tobacco industry has executed a calculated, menthol-centered strategy to establish a strong presence in African American communities, appropriate African American culture, and create a dependency on tobacco funding. As such, the predominate use of menthols among African American smokers is well documented among public health authorities. However, we have observed the way in which even tobacco control advocates have negotiated to exclude menthol as a means to protect other demographics from the harms of candy-flavored tobacco. We consider this to be counterproductive and an affront to the integrity of public health efforts. Further, we consider this to be reflective of historical racism.

African American populations have been disregarded as casualties of corporate profits and tobacco policy quick-wins. In order to address this social justice issue, The Center for Black Health & Equity is committed to **1) challenging the tobacco industry's infiltration into African American communities 2) promoting innovative, culturally competent cessation programs, and 3) educating community decision makers on effective strategies for enacting comprehensive tobacco-free policies.**

Menthol
How to fight for this social justice issue.

- Acknowledge the historical racism that has left African Americans unprotected.**
Public health advocates have been slow to prioritize African Americans in the move toward a tobacco-free society. A ban on menthol would save Black lives, yet policy change has focused on protecting other vulnerable demographics.
- To protect Black health, we must eliminate:**
 - Predatory marketing to vulnerable populations
 - Dense advertising and sampling vans
 - Price discounts in African American neighborhood stores
 - Sponsorships for African American events
 - Donations to African American organizations, elected officials and thought leaders
 - Attempts to influence our communities with misleading information and "alternative facts"
- Reject the tobacco industry's counterfeit role as Black community ally.**
The tobacco industry claims to honor Black lives while denying responsibility for the 45,000 Black deaths they cause each year. Even though there is no evidence that a ban on menthol will result in over-policing, the tobacco industry pays Black civic leaders to spread this misleading message.
- Fight against the sale and marketing of menthols.**
The tobacco industry saturates Black neighborhoods with menthol ads and discounts. They buy off Black elected officials and even appropriate Black culture – all to promote their deadly products. Citizens and public health advocates must stand against this kind of predatory marketing.

Most importantly, the issue of menthol must be viewed through the lens of racial equality and addressed through the work of restorative justice. Visit www.centerforblackhealth.org to read the full statement.

YOUTH ARE IN OUR CORNER

MENTHOL IN MY COMMUNITY: DIGITAL POWER WALL GALLERY

Build bold awareness on the issue of menthol products and marketing in our communities by creating a digital gallery of menthol products in the NMS PowerWall. **POST BY SUNDAY, MAY 15.**

How to Participate:

Find tobacco advertising in and around grocery and convenience stores, gas stations, smoke shops and near the cash registers. Look for menthol advertising in and around businesses. Check out the windows, walls and parking lots. Now grab your phones or cameras.



WHAT TO DO:

1. Remember we are showing the targeting and marketing by the tobacco industry, NOT the business or the employees. DO NOT include the names of the business or faces of employees or other customers in your photos.
2. Be aware of other products or advertising around the menthol products and advertising. If a product or advertisement is near products or advertisements for youth, such as candy, please include them in the photo to show how tobacco products and marketing are placed near products for youth.
3. Post pics on [No Menthol Sunday's Power Wall](https://takedowntobacco.org/no-menthol-sunday) (takedowntobacco.org/no-menthol-sunday). Post only ONE photo at a time.
4. Include location (town, village, city and state) in the text for each photo you post. Your post will help us tell the story of menthol across the United States and its influence in our communities.
5. Suggested caption: Menthol makes tobacco easier to start and harder to quit. #iseementhol #nms2022. @centerforblackhealth @mobilizeagainstitobaccolies

MENTHOL BAN:

REBUTTALS TO KEY ARGUMENTS & DEBUNKING MYTHS



I know many White people who smoke menthols. Why is this a racial issue?

For decades the tobacco industry specifically marketed menthols to African American communities. The industry appropriated elements of Black culture and heavily invested advertising dollars into African American publications. They are known for sponsoring Black events like the KOOL Jazz festival, saturating urban Black neighborhood stores with ads, and pricing menthols more cheaply in Black neighborhoods. As a result of their efforts, 85% of African American smokers choose menthols while less than 30% of White smokers prefer menthols.

Isn't tobacco use an issue of personal responsibility?

The tobacco industry used to distribute free samples of their deadly products to underage youth, handing them out from mobile units in Black neighborhoods like an ice cream truck. To this day, tobacco companies donate millions of dollars to institutions that are supposed to provide credible unbiased information so citizens can make good decisions. These include historically Black colleges and universities, African American newspapers, civic leaders, researchers and even elected officials.

Further, research shows that quitting menthols is more difficult than quitting tobacco without this characterizing flavor. African Americans consistently report more, but less successful, attempts at quitting menthols. It is possible that tobacco use is not as personal of a choice as many assume.

MENTHOL BAN:

REBUTTALS TO KEY ARGUMENTS & DEBUNKING MYTHS

Won't a ban on menthol increase the potential for unjustly criminalizing African Americans?

This is a tobacco industry argument that exploits the real issues of police brutality and mass incarceration. Excessive force and systemic racism are problems that must be addressed independently of public health measures. The FDA ban on mentholated tobacco polices manufacturers and retailers of the product—not an individual's use or possession of them.

Isn't it true that a ban on menthol will only create a black market?

Data from countries (including Canada) that have already banned menthol cigarettes, as well as data from the United States, show no likelihood of illicit trade of menthol cigarettes after they are prohibited. Surveys show, in fact, that a ban would encourage African Americans to quit menthols rather than seek them from a black market.

Is the FDA just trying to take away our personal freedom?

Like food, drugs, cleaning products and cosmetics, the FDA regulates products that pose a threat to the public's health or safety.

They do not regulate personal choices.



REBUTTALS TO KEY ARGUMENTS & MISPERCEPTIONS

AREN'T THERE BIGGER ISSUES FACING THE BLACK COMMUNITY?

Tobacco related illness kills more African Americans than murders, suicides, HIV and car accidents combined.

It would be an injustice to be silent on the issue.

No Menthol
SUNDAY

#NMS2022

SERMONS & PRESENTATIONS

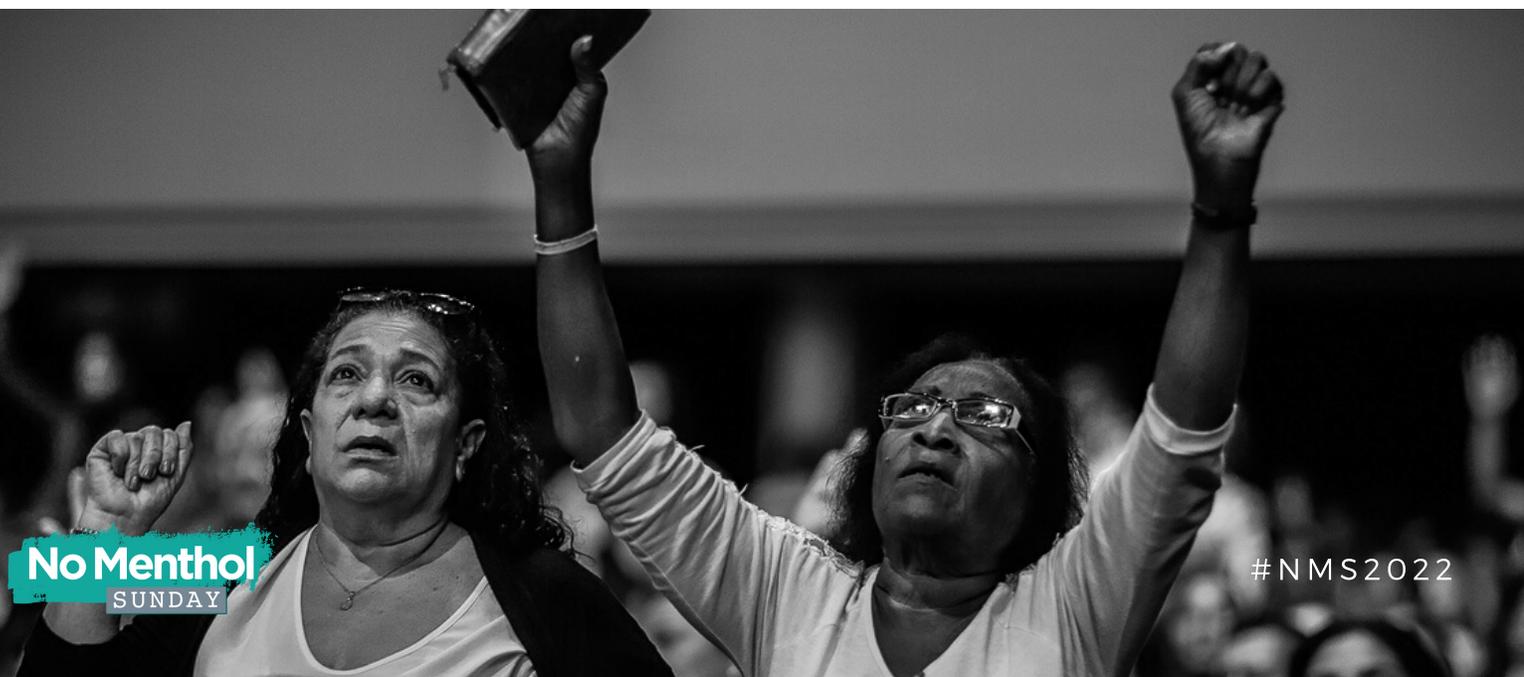
PAUL'S LETTER TO TIMOTHY NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES

Fight the Good Fight

It has long been known that the tobacco industry values profits over people. Money motivates the tobacco industry to aggressively lobby for laws that do more for their own pockets than for the wellbeing of citizens. Money is what keeps commercial tobacco on shelves even though its burden on families, the healthcare system, and the U.S. economy is well-documented. To be clear, the tobacco industry loves money.

You need look no further than the tobacco industry to understand why Paul warns young Timothy that the *love of money* is the source of *all kinds of evil* (I Timothy 6:10). In his letter to Timothy, Paul points out that some, in their thirst for money, have left their sense of goodness. He tells Timothy to run from such pursuits and to, instead, *fight the good fight of faith* (I Timothy 6:12).

In this same way, we must all actively oppose a "profits over people" culture, and fight faithfully for what is right. We are called to stand against evil and contend with forces of injustice. We will yet see what we have hoped for (Hebrew 11:1)! So when that day comes, like Paul, we too will declare that we have kept the faith, we have finished the race, and we have fought the good fight.



FROM THE PROPHET HABAKKUK

HEBREW BIBLE

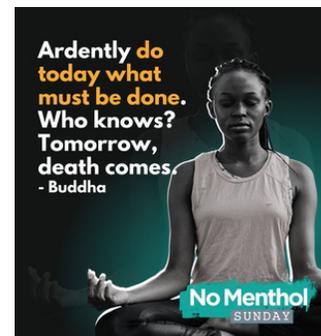
How Long, Lord?

Sometimes it seems that evil will always prevail. As we watch wrongdoers profit despite the death and disease that they cause, we can become discouraged. Like the prophet Habakkuk, we have all cried out, "How long, Lord? Why do you make me look at injustice?" (Hab1:3). We have wondered if we will have to watch the tobacco industry succeed forever. But the Lord responded to Habakkuk, declaring that the unjust will eventually be held guilty (v. 11). Even when justice seems to delay, we can wait patiently knowing that at the appointed time, our ultimate goal will not fail (Hab 2:3).

BUDDHIST MEDITATIVE THOUGHT & SLOGANS

A Path that Leads Away from Suffering

In Buddhism, it is honorable to seek to understand the root cause of suffering and choose a path to end it. The tobacco industry has spent decades beating a smooth path to illness and death for millions of Americans. They have used unethical marketing practices, manipulated law, and concocted formulas to make their poison as seductive as possible. Use No Menthol Sunday as a time to acknowledge this path to suffering. Then commit to developing and championing a path to end it. Talk to followers about how ending the sale of mentholated tobacco products can be the path that leads away from the suffering of so many.



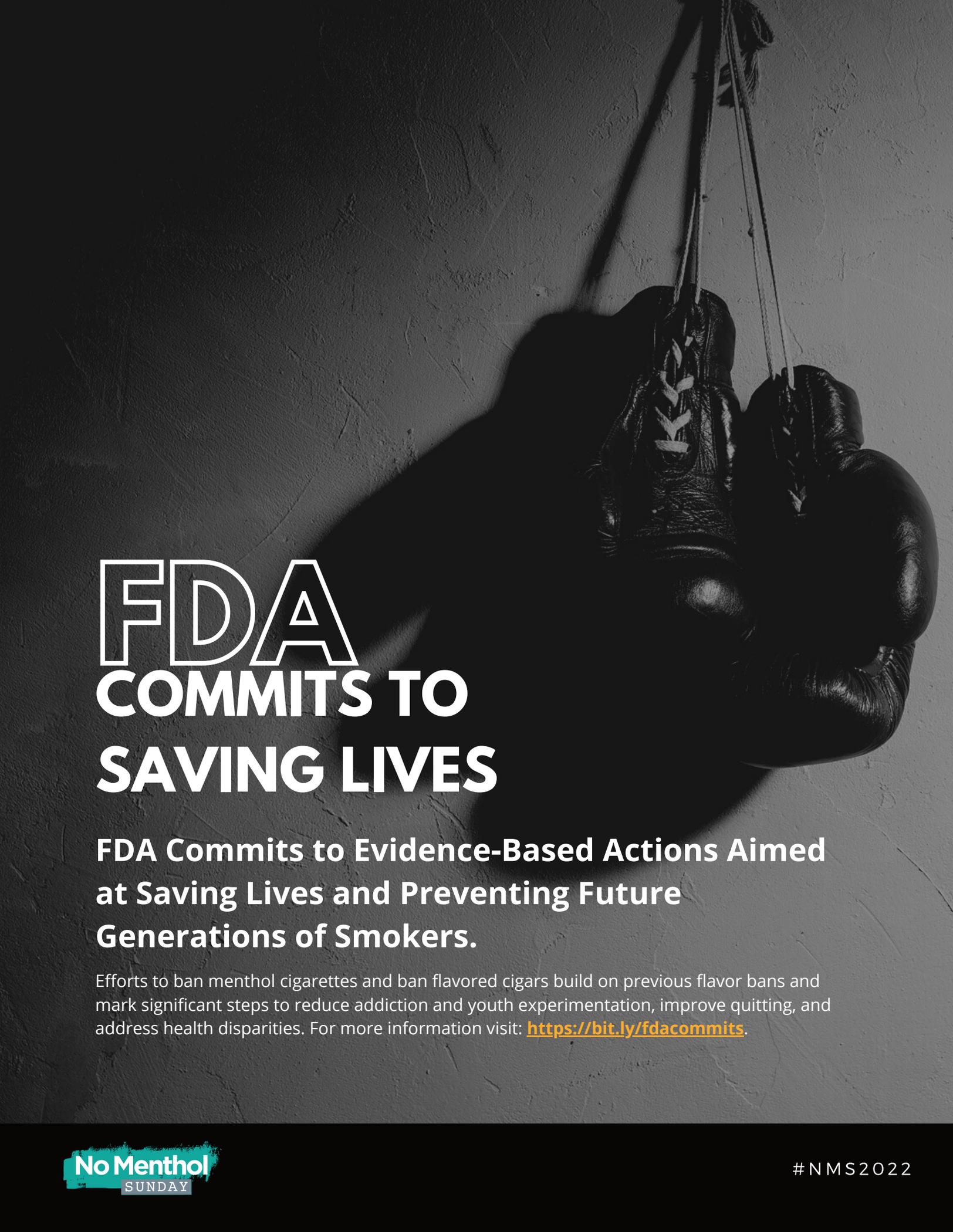
FOR FOLLOWERS OF ISLAM IN CONSIDERATION OF SALATUL-JUMU'AH

Our Body Has Rights Over Us

The Prophet Muhammad (s.a.w.) is quoted as saying, "Your body has a right over you." This is a reminder to Muslims that treating one's body kindly and with deference, and maintaining good health is a part of Deen. In Salat-ul-Jumu'ah leading to No Menthol Sunday, discuss the obligation to observe one's health and care for our bodies. Remind congregants that good health is a gift from Allah.

Additionally, the Qur'an states that one should show kindness to our family, neighbors and others (4:36). Secondhand smoke poses dangers not only to one's self but to others. For those who desire to quit smoking, invite them to start during Ramadhan.





FDA COMMITTS TO SAVING LIVES

FDA Commits to Evidence-Based Actions Aimed at Saving Lives and Preventing Future Generations of Smokers.

Efforts to ban menthol cigarettes and ban flavored cigars build on previous flavor bans and mark significant steps to reduce addiction and youth experimentation, improve quitting, and address health disparities. For more information visit: <https://bit.ly/fdacommits>.

LOCAL & STATEWIDE PARTICIPATION BEAT 'EM TO THE PUNCH

No Menthol Sunday is a unique way to engage your area coalitions and health departments in tobacco control efforts. While the FDA has committed to a flavor and menthol ban, local and state action is still needed. Implementation of this kind of policy could take years to realize.

**The FDA committed to implementing a menthol ban in 2021,
but states and local jurisdictions can make a move now.**

No Menthol Sunday is an excellent opportunity to build a faith-based network and get to know key leaders and influencers within your state's African American communities. In addition, there are many ways to promote No Menthol Sunday and use the observance day activities to build awareness about important tobacco-related community initiatives. It is even possible to use No Menthol Sunday to create buy-in for a new policy or reinforce an existing one.

Participation in No Menthol Sunday is a partnership activity with The Center for Black Health & Equity, and will fulfill requirements of RFA-DP20-2001. Our goal is to see participation in all 50 states.

Submit your city or state pledge to participate and register your events at NoMentholSunday.org.

Ways to Participate:

- Build your network of faith-based organizations to educate communities about the importance of tobacco-free policies and flavor bans that include menthol.
- Offer free NRT during the week of No Menthol Sunday
- Promote your state's 1-800-QUIT-NOW quitline and take note of calls during No Menthol Sunday
- Develop a plan to introduce a comprehensive flavor ban within your city, state or county.

Contact Greg Bolden at gbolden@centerforblackhealth.org for information about how The Center for Black Health & Equity can support your efforts.

HOW TO BE BOLD

FEARLESSLY BUILD AWARENESS ON NO MENTHOL SUNDAY

MAKE A PLEDGE

Whether for a day or a week, challenge your congregation to join the movement by not using tobacco in observance of No Menthol Sunday. Create a pledge of your own, and for others, to be held accountable in the personal fight against tobacco. Plan to follow up with one another's progress and provide support to those who need it.

DELIVER QUIT SUPPORT

If your place of worship is conducting in-person events, include printed information such as palm cards that direct them to resources for quitting. Remember that volunteers may not have all of the facts and stats on tobacco. They can always point community members to 1-800-QUIT-NOW. This number will connect callers with certified cessation counselors who can help them develop a personalized plan to quit smoking.

HOST A SCREENING OF BLACK LIVES/ BLACK LUNGS

Grab some popcorn and gather friends around to view the **Black Lives / Black Lungs** documentary available on YouTube. It's a short film investigating the tobacco industry's infiltration into the Black community. Created by filmmaker and activist Lincoln Mondy, the documentary is as relevant as ever. After the screening, stick around and engage in some questions and conversation about what you learned.



HOW TO BE BOLD

FEARLESSLY BUILD AWARENESS ON NO MENTHOL SUNDAY

KICK-OFF WEBINAR EVENT

Just before No Menthol Sunday, invite local convenient store owners, policy-makers and community members to join a webinar designed to announce the big day and engage them in activities. Have the mayor make a special tobacco-free proclamation, and challenge store owners to pledge not to sell mentholated tobacco on the observance day. Highlight youth stories about the impact of vaping in their schools, and don't forget to invite a prominent faith leader to share a few words of encouragement. Visit www.nomentholsunday.org to check out a few kick-offs around the country.

HOST A BRUNCH

A discussion about how or why someone should quit smoking can be uncomfortable. Make No Menthol Sunday an opportunity to break bread; some conversations are easier to have over a good meal. For No Menthol Sunday, consider inviting your peers to a virtual brunch (or meet in person). Take a holistic approach by showing concern for a friend's or group's personal care. Don't forget to bring resources for them to take home with them.

MAKE IT YOUR OWN

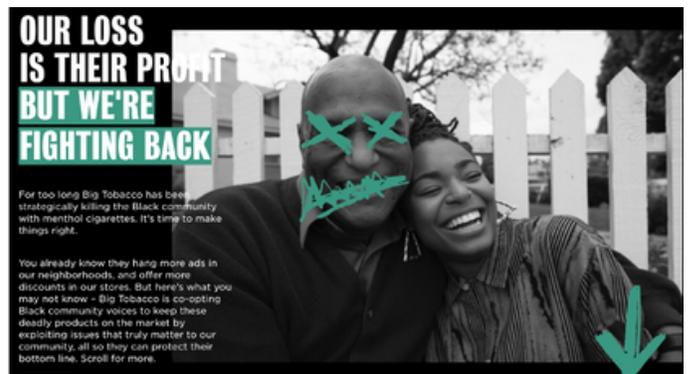
No Menthol Sunday is about finding unique and effective ways to educate your community and raise awareness about the need to quit smoking and end the sale of mentholated tobacco products. Use your own creativity to engage your faith community in this campaign. Celebrate "No Menthol Sabbath" or "No Menthol Praise Days" on any day in May. Don't forget to let us know how it is going by emailing your stories to info@centerforblackhealth.org.

CAMPAIGNS WORTH SHARING

California's We are Not Profit

It's time to end Big Tobacco's strategic killing of the Black community with menthol cigarettes. This campaign features facts about how the tobacco industry uses African American civic leaders to manipulate the Black community. View the campaign at tobaccofreeca.com/we-are-not-profit.

[View](#)



This is Quitting

This is Quitting is a free and anonymous text messaging program from Truth Initiative designed to help young people quit vaping. All support is tailored according to age. Learn more at truthinitiative.org/thisisquitting

[View](#)



Making Menthol Black

We can't change the fact that Big Tobacco spent nearly 50 years targeting African American communities. But we can still turn their damage around. This campaign highlights the cities across the U.S. that are starting to ban menthol. We have to keep the pressure mounting.

[View](#)



CONTENT WORTH SHARING

TIPS FROM FORMER SMOKERS

While most Americans understand that smoking cigarettes causes serious health effects, those who start smoking as youth or young adults may not realize smoking-related disease can happen relatively early in life. The 'Tips' campaign features compelling stories from former smokers and offers quit resources.

[View](#)



IT'S NOT JUST

This campaign educates community leaders and the public about the dangers and social injustice of tobacco marketing, and engage local stakeholders to promote community changes that limit the tobacco industry's presence, de-normalize tobacco use and eliminate secondhand smoke.

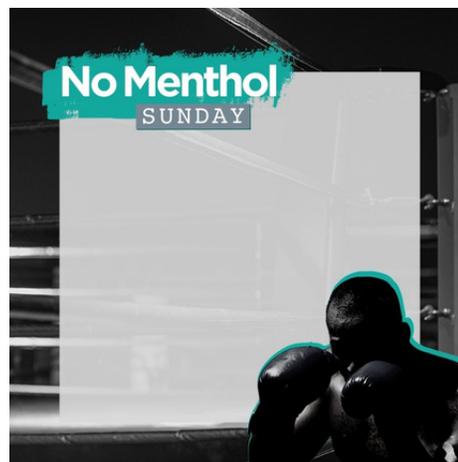
[View](#)



NMS POWERWALL

Tell us how you're making sure your community embraces new opportunities to live free from tobacco and post it on our digital power wall. Download your custom graphic to share on social media. Use the hashtag #NoMentholSunday! <https://www.takedowntobacco.org/no-menthol-sunday>

[View](#)



CONTENT WORTH SHARING

HOOKAH & USING CULTURE TO CON US

In this timely webinar, *The Culture of Manipulation: How Tobacco Profiteers Use Culture To Con Us*, respected Middle Eastern and African American scholars deconstruct the common and nuanced history of the cultural targeting of their respective communities by new and old tobacco industries seeking corporate profits.

[View](#)

COVID BIG QUIT

This campaign educates community leaders and the public about the dangers and social injustice of tobacco marketing, and engage local stakeholders to promote community changes that limit the tobacco industry's presence, de-normalize tobacco use and eliminate secondhand smoke.

[View](#)

MAKE A MEDIA SPLASH

Use the press release template and other resources found on the NoMentholSunday.org to make your #NMS2022 a newsworthy event. Contact your local news stations and newspaper reporters and tell them why a menthol ban is critical to the health of your community. Don't forget to use social media to the fullest.

[View](#)



ESSENCE

CELEBRITY FASHION BEAUTY HAIR LOVE LIFESTYLE NEWS VIDEOS FESTIVAL

HOME · HEALTH AND WELLNESS
Stop Menthol, Save Lives



CHURCH MORNING ANNOUNCEMENT

Today is No Menthol Sunday, the time of year that we have real conversations about ending addiction and getting poison out of our communities. Did you know that smoking still kills more African Americans each year than homicides, suicides, AIDS-related death, car accidents and police brutality combined? Yes, tobacco is still our number one killer. Most teens and African Americans who smoke choose menthols because the minty flavor helps make it easier to start smoking. It also makes it harder to quit smoking. Civil rights and public health advocates have been fighting for a ban on menthol for years.

Now, Isaiah 55:11 says that when the word of Lord goes out, it will not return void. It will accomplish what it was called to do--and succeed!

Family, I have historic news to report! After decades of delay, the FDA has finally committed to banning menthols and flavored cigars! This ban will help reduce addiction, help people quit, and keep our young people from ever wanting to pick up that filthy habit.

If you are a smoker but haven't talked to anyone about it, now is the time. We just want to pray with you, give you resources, and help you to find your way to freedom. We know it can take several tries before you quit for good. You can call 1-800-QUIT-NOW for free resources and coaching. Or feel free to contact me after service for more. Thank you.

ONE-TWO-PUNCH AFTER NO MENTHOL SUNDAY

- Get involved by spreading the word about the harms of menthol. This may be through social media or by continuing to provide our tools and information at your services.
- Build relationships with local officials who are interested in supporting the health marginalized communities. Ask them to support measures that are proven to reduce tobacco use such as restricting the sale of mentholated tobacco products within 500 feet of a school.
- Support congregants who want to quit tobacco with prayer and patience. Help members to reduce stress and find ways to join in on efforts to be healthier. Encourage tobacco users to call 1-800-Quit-Now. They can talk to a Quit Line coach who can help develop a plan for quitting.
- Talk to youth about nicotine addiction and importance of not smoking or using cigarettes.



If you have any additional questions or would like to start a community-wide movement, visit www.centerforblackhealth.org. Join The Center for Black Health & Equity's mailing list and follow us on Instagram, Facebook & Twitter.

TKO

RESOURCES & TEMPLATES

ALL CONTENT DOWNLOADABLE FROM
NOMENTHOLSUNDAY.COM

CHURCH FANS

Church fans commemorating No Menthol Sunday 2022 are available. They serve as both factsheets and cooling mechanisms. Visit NoMentholSunday.org to submit a purchase order.



SOCIAL MEDIA COVER IMAGE

Help us promote the event by adding this image to your Facebook and Twitter profile. Use the hashtag #NoMentholSunday or #NMS2022. Visit www.NoMentholSunday.org to download.



YARD SIGNS

Take your low-cost outdoor advertising up a notch by using economical H-frame yard signs to promote the day. Be sure to check with your local ordinances before you pitch your signs. And use a local printer-- they could use the business during this time!

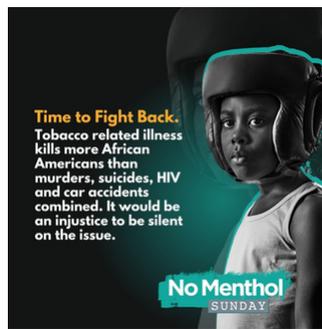


TKO

RESOURCES & TEMPLATES

SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS

Remind congregants of the observance day by posting these graphics to your website and social media outlets. Use the hashtag #NoMentholSunday or #NMS2022. Visit www.NoMentholSunday.org to download.



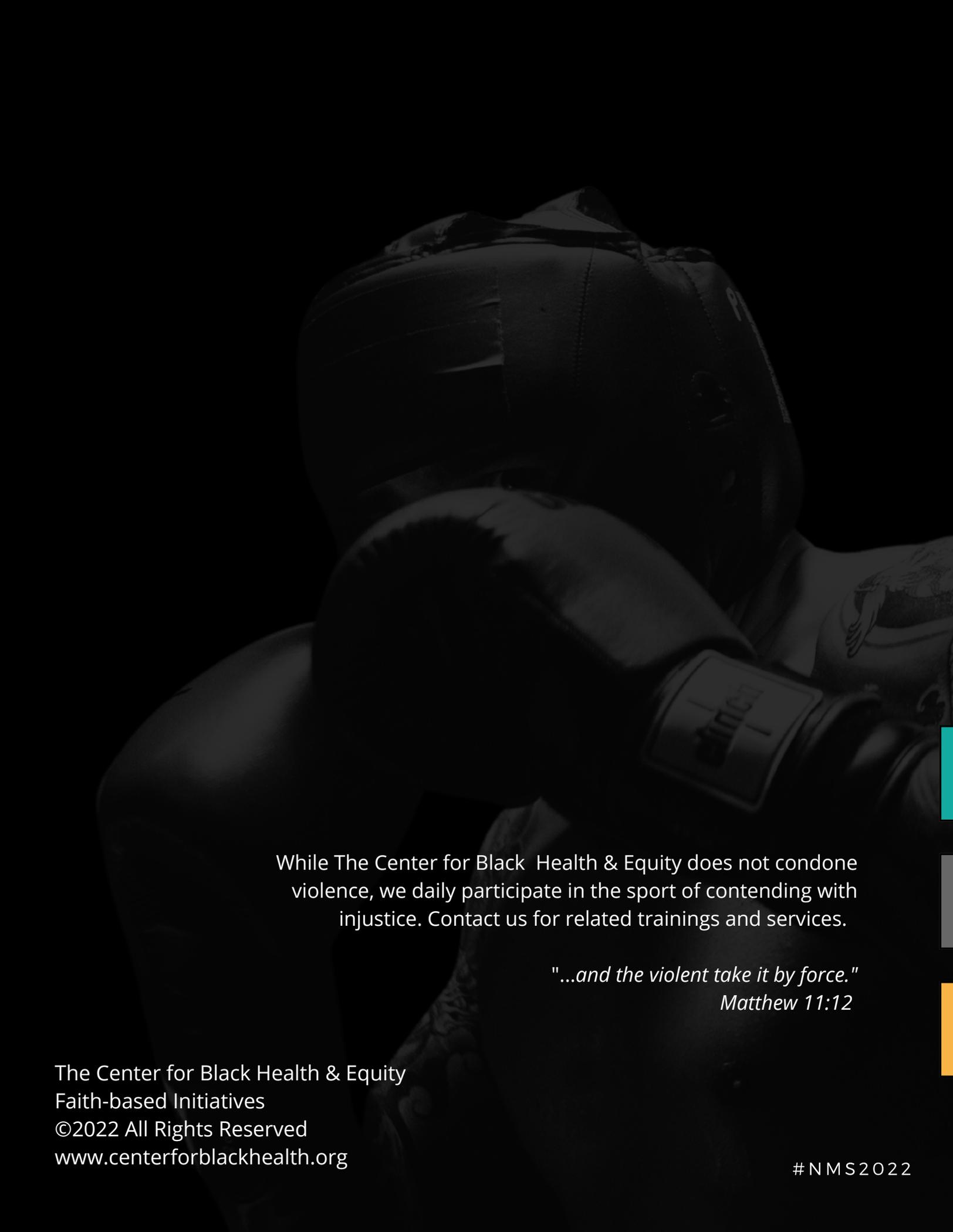
OTHER FEATURED ITEMS



[DOWNLOAD THE COLORING BOOK](#)



[DOWNLOAD THE PLANNING GUIDE](#)



While The Center for Black Health & Equity does not condone violence, we daily participate in the sport of contending with injustice. Contact us for related trainings and services.

*"...and the violent take it by force."
Matthew 11:12*

The Center for Black Health & Equity
Faith-based Initiatives
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#NMS2022