It’s Time for Denver to End the Sale of All Flavored Tobacco All products, all flavors, all locations — no exemptions

The Flavor Trap
Flavored products have long been a favorite tobacco industry strategy for targeting young people. Whether it’s with flavored e-cigarettes, menthol cigarettes or flavored cigars, the tobacco industry has used flavors to hook young people for decades. It’s time for Denver to stop this cycle of addiction for good.

Flavored E-cigarettes
Over 3.6 million kids in the U.S. now use e-cigarettes — 19.6% of high school students used e-cigarettes in 2020 compared to 11.3% just four short years ago, in 2016. It’s an epidemic that impacts every corner of the country, and Colorado has been hit hard. It’s clear that flavors are driving the demand for use — 97% of youth e-cigarette users report using a flavored product, and 70% cite flavors as the reason for their use. Among current e-cigarette users, nearly 39% of high school students and 20% of middle school students reported using e-cigarettes on 20 or more of the past 30 days. 22.5% of high school users and 9.4% of middle school users reported daily use.

Conversely, there is no evidence that flavors play a role in helping adult smokers quit smoking, and no e-cigarette product is FDA-approved as a cessation device. While nearly 1 in 5 high school students use e-cigarettes, there has been minimal uptake among adults — in 2018, 3.2% of adults used e-cigarettes, compared to 2.8% in 2017 and 3.2% in 2016. Ending the sale of flavored e-cigarettes eliminates a major source of e-cigarette demand among young people and preserves the tobacco flavor for adults who wish to continue using e-cigarettes. This action is urgently needed, particularly in light of the recent federal e-cigarette policy that leaves thousands of flavored products on the market, and the lack of state policy to protect Denver’s kids. During 2019-2020, disposable e-cigarette use increased approximately 1000% among high school current e-cigarette users.

Menthol Cigarettes
Over half (54%) of youth smokers ages 12-17 use menthol cigarettes. Decades of targeting by the tobacco industry mean menthol cigarettes are also disproportionately used by young people, African Americans and the LGBTQ community. Menthol masks the harsh taste of cigarettes, making them more appealing to novice users. A 2013 FDA report determined that menthol cigarettes lead to increased youth initiation, greater addiction and decreased success in quitting smoking. And just like regular cigarettes, menthol cigarettes cause over 10 types of cancer, heart disease, stroke and many other diseases.

Flavored Cigars
For the first time, cigars were more commonly used among high school students in 2019 (7.2%) than cigarettes (5.8%). Cheap, flavored cigars mask the harshness of cigar smoke, and sales have increased even as cigarette sales decline. Not surprisingly, flavored cigars are most popular among youth, setting them up for addiction.

IT’S TIME TO STOP THE TOBACCO INDUSTRY FROM TARGETING DENVER’S KIDS WITH FLAVORED TOBACCO PRODUCTS
ENDORSED BY:
African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council - AATCLC
American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Chapter
American Cancer Society - Cancer Action Network
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
Americans for Nonsmokers' Rights
Asian Pacific Development Center
Boys and Girls Club of Metro Denver
Brother Jeff's Cultural Center
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Capitol Hill United Neighborhoods
Center for African American Health
The Center for Black Health & Equity
Center for Health Progress
The Center on Colfax
Children’s Hospital Colorado
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Colorado Academy of Family Physicians
Colorado Association for School-Based Health Care
Colorado Academy of Family Physicians
Colorado Black Health Collaborative
Colorado Cancer Coalition
Colorado Children’s Campaign
Colorado Children’s Healthcare Access Program (CCHAP)
Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
Colorado Dental Association
Colorado Latino Leadership, Advocacy & Research Organization (CLLARO)
Colorado Organization for Latina Opportunity and Reproductive Rights (COLOR)
Colorado Parent Teacher Association (PTA)
Colorado Public Health Association
Colorado Society for Respiratory Care
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ONE Colorado
Overland Park Neighborhood Association
Parents Against Vaping Electronic Cigarettes (PAVe)
Preventing Tobacco Addiction Foundation
Rocky Mountain Hospital for Children
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