



Oncology Nursing Society

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ONS Statement on FDA's Decision in Restricting Menthol-Flavored Products and Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems

The Oncology Nursing Society applauds the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) decision to restrict the marketing, sales, and distribution of menthol-flavored cigarettes and all flavored cigars and electronic nicotine delivery systems.

The congressional authority granted to the FDA allows the overwhelming science in nicotine addiction prevention to drive stronger public health policy. "Our members promote evidence-based healthcare decision-making and patient-centered care. Oncology nurses see the devastating impact of smoking in their patients every day and understand the strong connection to cancer and cardiovascular disease. For too long, the tobacco industry has directly marketed to communities of color, the LGBTQ+ community, and low-income individuals. This FDA announcement is a strong step forward in reducing the appeal and addiction associated with flavored tobacco products and reversing the youth smoking epidemic ravaging the country," said ONS President Nancy Houlihan, MA, RN, AOCN®.

Tobacco use and exposure to tobacco smoke are known human carcinogens and have contributed to a global epidemic and public health emergency. Tobacco continues to be a leading cause of preventable death and illness in the United States. At least one dozen different types of cancer are attributable to tobacco use, in addition to other chronic and acute illnesses. Six million tobacco-related deaths occur every year. Prevention of tobacco-related disease, disability, and death could be achieved through tobacco control: stopping uptake, helping smokers quit, and preventing exposure to secondhand smoke. Nurses' involvement in community action, encouraging tobacco-free environments, supporting effective control policies, and raising awareness about the detrimental effects of smoking are already making a difference.

Nurses educate the public, parents, and underage tobacco users about the damaging health consequences of vaping. Nurses are taking action in their own communities to address youth vaping, flavored tobacco, and electronic cigarettes. As a partner with the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, ONS continues to advocate for stronger public health policies for smoking cessation. More needs to be done to restrict the ever-evolving tobacco industry's grip on the American public's imagination about the romance, glamour, and masculinity of smoking and the FDA's decision is a step in the right direction.