



SEIU Healthcare
United for Quality Care

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September 19, 2017

Mayor Chris Coleman
15 Kellogg Blvd W # 390
St Paul, MN 55102

Jamie Gulley
President

Dear Mayor Coleman:

Jigme Ugen
Executive Vice President

Lisa Weed
Executive Vice President

Dianne Edwards
Executive Vice President

Liz Asmus
Executive Vice President

Phillip Cryan
Executive Vice President

SEIU Healthcare Minnesota represents more than 35,000 healthcare and long-term care workers in hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and home care throughout the state of Minnesota. As healthcare workers, we are deeply concerned about preserving public health and reducing the cost of disease. We encourage you and members of the City Council to support ordinance to restrict the sale of menthol tobacco in Saint Paul.

Each year smoking claims the lives of more than 6,000 Minnesotans. Healthcare workers, on a daily basis, see how tobacco devastates our patients, families, and friends through unnecessary death and disease. Beyond this astonishing loss of life, the costs of tobacco have profound effects on our economy. A recent study from Blue Cross Blue Shield of Minnesota revealed that tobacco use resulted in \$3 billion in excess healthcare costs and more than \$4.3 billion in lost productivity in 2014. This alarming figure—more than \$7 billion annually—demonstrates the importance of tobacco control efforts like the one you are considering.

While tobacco costs all Minnesotans, the burden of tobacco disease and death weigh unequally on people of color and youth. The tobacco industry has targeted these communities relentlessly for decades with menthol tobacco, which is easier to start and harder to quit than non-menthol tobacco.

By restricting the sale of menthol tobacco, you can ensure future generations don't suffer the health and economic burdens of tobacco use. Thank you for your leadership in considering this ordinance.

Sincerely,

Jamie Gulley
President

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c: St. Paul City Council Members

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