

# American Academy of Pediatrics



DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™

## Minnesota Chapter

September 21, 2017

### Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

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The Honorable Chris Coleman  
Honorable Members of the Saint Paul City Council  
15 Kellogg Blvd. W.  
Saint Paul, MN 55102

Dear Mayor Coleman, Council President Stark and Members of the Saint Paul City Council:

On behalf of the Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MNAAP) and its membership of more than 1,000 pediatricians and pediatricians-in-training, I write today to urge your support of the pending ordinance to restrict the sale of menthol tobacco to adult-only retail shops.

Tobacco's health dangers are well known, and pediatricians all too often see our young patients struggling with addiction. Menthol tobacco presents an additional risk to young people, as the flavoring masks the harshness of tobacco smoke allowing dependence to take hold more readily and quickly. Research into tobacco addiction has shown that young people who smoke menthol cigarettes are more likely to smoke within one hour of waking and more likely to report cravings compared to high school smokers of non-menthol cigarettes. The tobacco industry has specifically targeted menthol flavored tobacco at communities of color, the LGBTQ community, and Native Americans, and these communities are disproportionately impacted by menthol tobacco's harm. Minnesota has much to do to reduce health disparities, and efforts such as the one before you will prove very impactful.

St. Paul's proposal to bar the sale of menthol-flavored tobacco products to adult-only stores will reduce the supply of these cigarettes available to young people, leading to less addiction and better health outcomes. The MNAAP strongly urges adoption of this important ordinance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Kiragu".

Andrew Kiragu, MD, FAAP  
President  
Minnesota Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sue Berry".

Sue Berry, MD, FAAP  
Past President, Minnesota Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics  
Saint Paul resident