

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

Executive Budget Proposal to End the Sale of Flavored Tobacco and Increase the State Cigarette Tax to Protect the Next Generation – Health Budget (S4007/A3007) Part O and Revenue Budget (S4009/A3009) Part S

American Nurses Association - NY (ANA-NY) supports Part O of the Health Budget Bill (S4007/A3007) and Part S of the Revenue Budget Bill (S4009/A3009), which would end the sale of all flavored tobacco products and raise the cigarette tax to make tobacco products less appealing and more expensive for youth to prevent another generation falling victim to this deadly addiction. It would also close loopholes in the State law restricting the sale of flavored e-cigarettes to ensure compliance.

According to the 2022 National Youth Tobacco Survey, more than 2.5 million kids across the country are using tobacco products. 85% of high school and 81% of middle school students use flavored products with fruit, candy/desserts/other sweets, mint, and menthol reported as the most popular flavors. Flavors are a marketing weapon used by tobacco manufacturers to target youth and young people to a lifetime of addiction. If New York is to ever succeed in ending the cycle of addiction to tobacco, it is imperative that we stop enabling the tobacco companies to take advantage of our children and end the sale of all flavored tobacco products including menthol cigarettes.

Tobacco manufacturers have aggressively targeted communities of color and LGBTQ+ communities with menthol products, leading to an unequal burden of death and disease. Internal tobacco industry documents show that these companies have intentionally targeted African Americans and other minorities through advertising in magazines with high readership by these populations, including youth, and targeting specific neighborhoods with higher Hispanic and African American populations with free product giveaways, advertising, and promotions to make products cheaper in those neighborhoods. In the absence of a comprehensive proposal that includes all flavors, all products, and all retailers, youth will gravitate towards and continue to initiate tobacco use with available flavored tobacco products.

Also increasing the cigarette tax (as proposed in the SFY 2024 Executive Budget) will encourage cessation and reduce tobacco use by youth. Cigarette taxes have not been increased in New York State in over ten years. According to the U.S. Surgeon General and World Health Organization, increasing the price of cigarettes is one of the most effective ways to prevent and reduce smoking, especially among youth. Raising the tax on tobacco encourages cessation and reduces youth initiation, which will translate to significant reductions in tobacco-related death and disease and associated health care costs. The revenue generated from the proposed \$1 increase will generate an estimated \$51 million, which could be used to provide additional supports for those who want to quit.

These budget proposals take a huge step toward decreasing tobacco initiation and use by youth, and with it, saving lives across New York for generations to come. We strongly support ending the sale of all flavored tobacco products including menthol cigarettes and increasing the cigarette tax by at least \$1 per pack. It is up to us to prevent our children and loved ones from being preyed upon by the tobacco industry and being exploited for profit.

For these reasons, American Nurses Association – NY (ANA-NY) asks your support of these lifesaving proposals and urges their inclusion in final 2023-2024 State Budget.