

# BIG TOBACCO'S CAMPAIGN OF DISINFORMATION AND DOUBT



PUBLIC HEALTH  
LAW CENTER  
at Mitchell Hamline School of Law

Joelle M. Lester  
Director of Commercial Tobacco Control  
Programs  
Public Health Law Center



# THE PUBLIC HEALTH LAW CENTER



# LONG HISTORY OF MISINFORMATION



*According to a recent Nationwide survey:*  
**MORE DOCTORS SMOKE CAMELS**  
**THAN ANY OTHER CIGARETTE**

## A Frank Statement to Cigarette Smokers

RECENT REPORTS on experiments with mice have given wide publicity to a theory that cigarette smoking is in some way linked with lung cancer in human beings.

Although conducted by doctors of professional standing, these experiments are not regarded as conclusive in the field of cancer research. However, we do not believe that any serious medical research, even though its results are inconclusive should be disregarded or lightly dismissed.

At the same time, we feel it is in the public interest to call attention to the fact that eminent doctors and research scientists have publicly questioned the claimed significance of these experiments.

Distinguished authorities point out:

1. That medical research of recent years indicates many possible causes of lung cancer.
2. That there is no agreement among the authorities regarding what the cause is.
3. That there is no proof that cigarette smoking is one of the causes.
4. That statistics purporting to link cigarette smoking with the disease could apply with equal force to any one of many other aspects of modern life. Indeed the validity of the statistics themselves is questioned by numerous scientists.

We accept an interest in people's health as a basic responsibility, paramount to every other consideration in our business. We believe the products we make are not injurious to health.

We always have and always will cooperate closely with those whose task it is to safeguard the public health.

For more than 300 years tobacco has given solace, relaxation, and enjoyment to mankind. At one time or another during those years critics have held it responsible for practically every disease of the human body. One by one these charges have been abandoned for lack of evidence.

Regardless of the record of the past, the fact that cigarette smoking today should even be suspected as a cause of a serious disease is a matter of deep concern to us.

Many people have asked us what we are doing to meet the public's concern aroused by the recent reports. Here is the answer:

1. We are pledging aid and assistance to the research effort into all phases of tobacco use and health. This joint financial aid will of course be in addition to what is already being contributed by individual companies.
2. For this purpose we are establishing a joint industry group consisting initially of the undersigned. This group will be known as TOBACCO INDUSTRY RESEARCH COMMITTEE.
3. In charge of the research activities of the Committee will be a scientist of unimpeachable integrity and national repute. In addition there will be an Advisory Board of scientists disinterested in the cigarette industry. A group of distinguished men from medicine, science, and education will be invited to serve on this Board. These scientists will advise the Committee on its research activities.

This statement is being issued because we believe the people are entitled to know where we stand on this matter and what we intend to do about it.

### TOBACCO INDUSTRY RESEARCH COMMITTEE

5400 EMPIRE STATE BUILDING, NEW YORK 1, N. Y.

#### SPONSORS:

THE AMERICAN TOBACCO COMPANY, INC.  
*Paul M. Hahn, President*

BENSON & HEDGES  
*Joseph F. Culham, Jr., President*

BRIGHT BELL WAREHOUSE ASSOCIATION  
*F. S. Royter, President*

BROWN & WELLSMANN TOBACCO CORPORATION  
*Timothy F. Hartnett, President*

BURLY AUCTION WAREHOUSE ASSOCIATION  
*Albert Clay, President*

BURLY TOBACCO GROWERS COOPERATIVE ASSOCIATION  
*John W. Jones, President*

LARUS & BROTHER COMPANY, INC.  
*W. T. Reed, Jr., President*

F. LORILLARD COMPANY  
*Herbert A. Kent, Chairman*

MARTLAND TOBACCO GROWERS ASSOCIATION  
*Samuel C. Linton, General Manager*

PHILIP MORRIS & CO., LTD., INC.  
*O. Parker McComat, President*

R. J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO COMPANY  
*E. A. Durr, President*

STEPHANO BROTHERS, INC.  
*C. S. Stephano, D.Sc., Director of Research*

TOBACCO ASSOCIATES, INC.  
*(An equalizer of the tobacco growers)*  
*J. R. Hanson, President*

UNITED STATES TOBACCO COMPANY  
*J. W. Peterson, President*

# LONG HISTORY OF MISINFORMATION

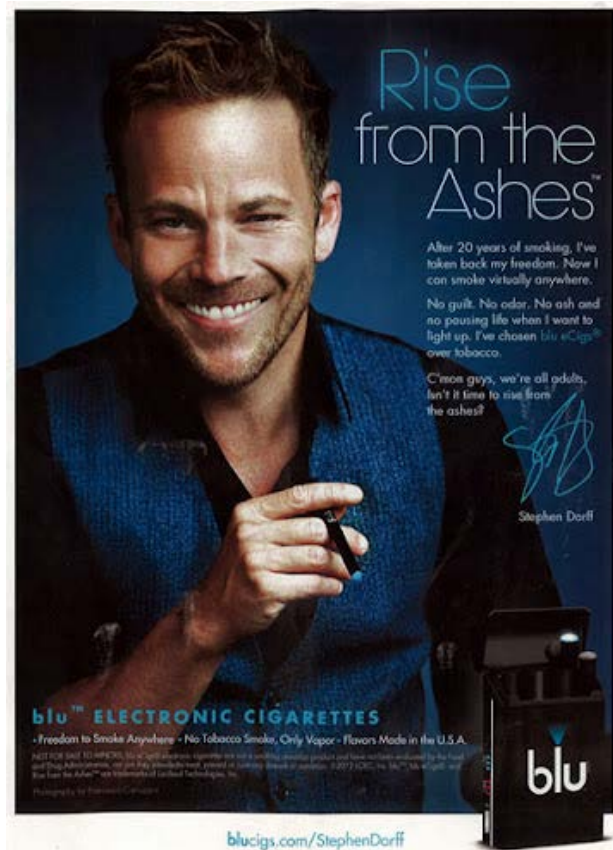


# LONG HISTORY OF MISINFORMATION

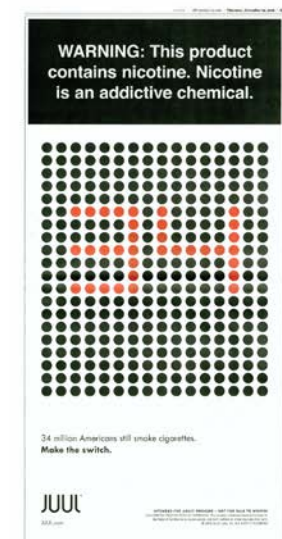
1. Tobacco companies falsely denied that they can and do manipulate the level of nicotine in their products to create and sustain addiction, and have been since at least 1954.
2. Tobacco companies “falsely denied, distorted and minimized” the link between cigarette smoking and disease, even though they internally recognized its existence.
3. Tobacco companies concealed evidence and publicly denied that nicotine is addictive.
4. Tobacco companies “falsely marketed and promoted low-tar and light cigarettes as less harmful” than regular cigarettes to keep people smoking and sustain revenues.
5. Tobacco companies internally acknowledged that secondhand smoke is hazardous to nonsmokers, yet still gave false and misleading public statements denying the fact.



# CURRENT CLIMATE OF DOUBT



## Juul Ads With Cessation Claims

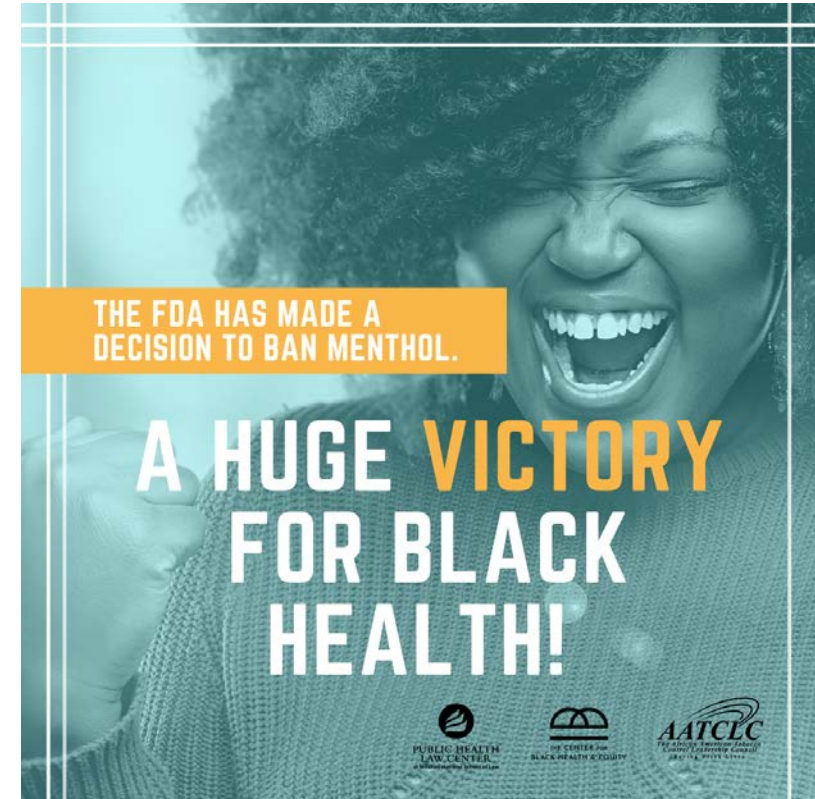


# MENTHOL: A CASE STUDY



# FDA RESPONDS TO CITIZEN PETITION AT LAST

1. FDA intends to issue a proposed rule to prohibit menthol as a characterizing flavor in cigarettes.
2. FDA plans to work with HHS to enlist and collaborate with other entities who provide support to menthol smokers who quit or want to quit as a result of a menthol regulation going into effect.





# FDA RESPONDS TO CITIZEN PETITION AT LAST



Additionally, the FDA announced that it intends to issue a proposed rule to prohibit menthol and all other characterizing flavors in cigars.

# WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT MENTHOL RULE

1. Menthol increases initiation, makes it harder to quit, and has been targeted towards African Americans and the LGBTQ+ community for decades.
2. Menthol ban would save hundreds of thousands of lives.
3. Proposed Rule would restrict the manufacture and distribution.
4. FDA lacks the authority to regulate use and possession.
5. FDA possesses tools to address illicit sales of tobacco products.
6. The problem of racism in policing and enforcement is real.



# BIG TOBACCO'S TALKING POINTS LIES AND APPROPRIATION



- Menthol cigarettes are no more harmful than other cigarettes.
- Tobacco use is a matter of personal choice and personal responsibility.
- Banning menthol will increase criminalization of African Americans.
- Banning menthol will create illicit market.
- FDA is singling out the preferred product of African Americans.



# LESSONS LEARNED FOR OTHER PUBLIC HEALTH CONTEXTS

- Robust public education campaigns are essential.
- Leaders and members of the targeted communities are the best spokespeople to rebut misinformation.
- There is a disconnect between how public health professionals carefully describe risk and how the sources of misinformation do so.
- Ongoing investment in public health infrastructure and public health education is critical to build and maintain trust in the system.

# CONTACT US



651.290.7506



[publichealthlawcenter@mitchellhamline.edu](mailto:publichealthlawcenter@mitchellhamline.edu)



[www.publichealthlawcenter.org](http://www.publichealthlawcenter.org)



[@phealthlawctr](https://twitter.com/phealthlawctr)



[facebook.com/publichealthlawcenter](https://facebook.com/publichealthlawcenter)