September 24, 2019

First Lady Melania Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mrs. Trump:

Our organizations thank you for raising the alarm about the epidemic of youth e-cigarette use in the United States and for your support of the Administration's strong plan and necessary action to remove all non-tobacco flavored e-cigarettes from the market, including mint and menthol flavors. We share your concern about the use of e-cigarettes among our nation's youth and support the proposed prohibition on the sale of flavored e-cigarettes. As you rightly noted, we must do everything we can to protect America's kids and prevent e-cigarettes from becoming an on-ramp to nicotine addiction for a generation of youth.

Data from the 2019 National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS) shows that the youth e-cigarette epidemic has gotten even worse in the past year. E-cigarette use among high school students rose from 20.8% in 2018 to 27.5% in 2019, meaning that more than 1 in 4 high schoolers use e-cigarettes. A total of 5 million U.S. kids now use e-cigarettes.

Nearly all (97%) current youth e-cigarette users use flavored e-cigarettes and 70% use e-cigarettes "because they come in flavors I like." If the Administration's plan is swiftly and fully implemented, it will play a critical role in reversing this public health crisis.

We also stress our strong support for fully implementing the compliance policy as announced on September 11, which included a prohibition on mint and menthol flavors. As the 2019 NYTS data shows, mint and menthol are just as appealing to youth as other e-cigarette flavors like fruit. The percentage of high school e-cigarette users who report using mint and menthol flavors rose to 63.8% in 2019, up from 51.2% in 2018 and 42.3% in 2017. Given the prevalence of mint and menthol flavors among youth e-cigarette users and the lack of evidence that these flavors play any role in helping adults quit smoking, there is no public health justification to exempt them from any policy proposal. If the goal is to remove the e-cigarettes that are most attractive to youth, any proposal that ignores mint and menthol flavors falls short.

We strongly support the proposed comprehensive prohibition on flavored e-cigarettes and thank you for helping to protect America's kids from the unrelenting efforts of the tobacco industry to hook kids.

Sincerely,

Academy of General Dentistry
Action on Smoking and Health
African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council
Allergy & Asthma Network
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Oral and Maxillofacial Radiology
American Academy of Otolaryngology- Head and Neck Surgery
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Association for Cancer Research
American Association for Respiratory Care
American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network
American College of Cardiology
American College of Physicians
American College of Preventive Medicine
American Dental Association
American Federation of School Administrators
American Heart Association
American Lung Association
American Medical Student Association
American Public Health Association
American School Health Association
American Society of Clinical Oncology
American Thoracic Society
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids
Catholic Health Association of the United States
ClearWay Minnesota
Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America
Counter Tools
Eta Sigma Gamma – National Health Education Honorary
International Association for the Study of Lung Cancer
March of Dimes
National African American Tobacco Prevention Network
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Education Association
National Hispanic Medical Association
National Network of Public Health Institutes
Oncology Nursing Society
Parents Against Vaping E-Cigarettes (PAVe)
Protect Kids: Fight Flavored E-Cigarettes
Public Health Law Center
Public Health Solutions
Respiratory Health Association
Society for Public Health Education
Students Against Destructive Decisions
The Society of State Leaders of Health and Physical Education
The Society of Thoracic Surgeons
Trinity Health
Trust for America's Health
Truth Initiative
U.S. PIRG