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of all people in Florida through integrated  
state, county & community efforts.



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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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**MEDIA CONTACT:** Marie Mott  
desk 850-595-6500x6000  
**Public Contact:** Vanessa Phillips  
850-595-6500x1830

## **TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA IN ESCAMBIA COUNTY RAISES AWARENESS OF THE DANGERS OF MENTHOL CIGARETTES**

*- World No Tobacco Day is May 31 -*

**PENSACOLA, FL** – Tobacco Free Florida in Escambia County (TFF-Escambia) joins Tobacco Free Florida (TFF) and the National African American Tobacco Prevention Network's (NAATPN) to raise awareness about the dangers of menthol cigarettes during World No Tobacco Day. Every year on May 31, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the public health community observe World No Tobacco Day to highlight the health risks associated with tobacco use and to advocate for reduced tobacco consumption.

This year, NAATPN's approach to World No Tobacco Day is No Menthol Sunday. TFF-Escambia is joining this important movement to educate Escambia County residents about the added dangers of menthol cigarettes.

Local SWAT youth will participate in the statewide social media campaign, lending their voices to raise awareness about dangers associated with menthol tobacco. SWAT youth will be posting the hashtag #NoMentholSunday on their social media accounts on World No Tobacco Day which will occur on Sunday, May 31, 2015.

Internal tobacco-industry documents provide evidence of how tobacco companies have deliberately targeted young people and African American populations with menthol cigarette advertising. Additional data indicate cigarette smokers between the ages of 12 and 17 years use menthol at higher rates than adults, even those ages 18 to 25.

"Menthol tobacco products are increasingly popular amongst specific groups," said Vanessa Phillips, Escambia County Tobacco Prevention Coordinator. "We want to emphasize that menthol is still flavoring. Flavored tobacco products are used to target youth and African American populations, and are linked to increased rates of lung cancer amongst these populations. Let's stop menthol in its tracks beginning with No Menthol Sunday."

Menthol cigarettes provide a minty flavor and cooling sensation, covering up the taste of tobacco and reducing throat irritation caused by smoking. As a result, menthol cigarettes lead to increased smoking initiation among youth and young adults. According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), menthol cigarette smokers have greater addiction to tobacco and decreased success in quitting smoking.

"Many Floridians are unaware that menthol makes cigarette smoking easier to start and harder to quit," said Tobacco Free Florida Bureau Chief Shannon Hughes. "We want to raise awareness about this

serious concern and let menthol users know that while quitting can be difficult, the state has free services that can help significantly.”

Tobacco Free Florida offers residents free services that can double a tobacco user’s chances of successfully quitting. Tobacco Free Florida’s 3 Free & Easy Ways to Quit include:

- **CALL:** Call the Florida Quitline at 1-877-U-CAN-NOW to speak with a Quit Coach® who will help you assess your addiction and help you create a personalized quit plan.
- **CLICK:** Tobacco Free Florida’s online cessation tool can be accessed at [tobaccofreeflorida.com/webcoach](http://tobaccofreeflorida.com/webcoach).
- **COME IN:** Florida Department of Health in Escambia County by calling (850) 595-6500 ext. 1830 or visiting 1295 W. Fairfield Drive. Pensacola, FL 32501.

For more information, please visit [www.tobaccofreeflorida.com](http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com).

### **ABOUT WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY**

World No Tobacco Day is a national day of awareness highlighting the health risks associated with tobacco use and advocating for effective policies to reduce tobacco consumption. World No Tobacco Day was created by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 1987, and is observed by all United Nations (UN) Member States annually on May 31.

### **ABOUT TOBACCO FREE FLORIDA**

The department’s Tobacco Free Florida campaign is a statewide cessation and prevention campaign funded by Florida’s tobacco settlement fund. Tobacco users interested in quitting are encouraged to use one of the state’s three ways to quit. Since 2007, more than 126,140 Floridians have successfully quit, using one of these free services. To learn more about Tobacco Free Florida and the state’s free quit resources, visit [www.tobaccofreeflorida.com](http://www.tobaccofreeflorida.com) or follow the campaign on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida](https://www.facebook.com/TobaccoFreeFlorida) or on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla](https://www.twitter.com/tobaccofreefla).

The Florida Department of Health works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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