Use of Flavored (Non-Menthol) Cigarettes in Maryland: 2006

Smoking is the leading preventable cause of disease and death, costing the state of Maryland more than $2 billion each year. In 2006, the state of Maryland conducted two surveys of tobacco use behaviors and attitudes - one of middle and high school students and another of adults. The surveys were funded by Maryland's Cigarette Restitution Fund Program, which oversees the use of funds awarded to Maryland as a result of the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement between the states and the tobacco industry.

Background
- The popularity of flavored (non-menthol) cigarettes among young people in the United States has grown in recent years.\(^1\)
- Flavored cigarettes are particularly attractive to younger smokers because they are sold in a variety of candy-like flavors such as chocolate, cherry, strawberry, and orange and they cost less than regular cigarettes\(^1\).
- Flavor delivery technologies hidden from consumers and public health professionals, including the use of a plastic pellet placed in the cigarette filter, raises concerns as to potential added health risks associated with using new flavored tobacco products\(^2\).
- Flavored cigarettes can promote youth initiation and help young occasional smokers to become daily smokers by reducing or masking the natural harshness and taste of tobacco smoke and increasing the acceptability of a toxic product.\(^3\)

Flavored Cigarette Smoking Among Maryland Youth Younger than 18 years old\(^4\):
- Nine percent of Maryland under-age youth had used flavored cigarettes in the past 12 months.
- About 2 out of 5 under-age current smokers (38.5%) had used flavored cigarettes in the past 12 months.
- Asian (56.8%), Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander (55.5%), and American Indian (54.6%) current smokers were most likely to have used flavored cigarettes in the past 12 months.
- Rates of flavored tobacco use among current smokers in the past 12 months ranged from 33.5% in Southern Maryland to 41.9% in Suburban Washington.
- Male (42.2%) current smokers were more likely than female smokers (34.3%) to have used flavored cigarettes in the last 12 months.
- High school (38.6%) and middle school (38.4%) current smokers had similar rates of flavored cigarette use.

Flavored Cigarette Smoking Among Maryland adults 18 years old and older\(^5\):
- About seven percent (6.6%) of Maryland adults reported ever using flavored cigarettes.
- About 1 out of 5 adult current smokers (22.5%) reported ever using flavored cigarettes.
- Seven percent of male current smokers reported using flavored cigarettes every day or some days, compared to 4.1% of female current smokers.

Rates of flavored cigarette use among youth in Maryland are higher than rates of use among adults, suggesting that the addition of flavoring to cigarettes can attract young people to the idea of smoking. Rates are also higher among youth in some racial/ethnic groups and regions than others, suggesting that aspects of peer culture or target marketing may be influential. State legislation, regulations, tobacco prevention and cessation programs, as well as research scientists should address specific psychological, social, and cultural determinants that influence each racial/ethnic group's use of and dependence on flavored cigarettes.

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1 American Cancer Society. Child and Teen Tobacco Use. 2007. Available from:
http://www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_10_2X_Child_and_Teen_Tobacco_Use.asp

2 Carpenter C.M., Wayne G.F., Pauly J.L., Koh H.K. and Connolly G.N., New cigarette brands with flavors that

3 Wayne and Connolly, “How Cigarette Design Can Affect Youth Initiation into Smoking.”

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