

Webinar Community Feedback – Breakout Sessions

Breakout: 1

Notes: **Katie Alegria**

Examples of work that addresses policy:

Bailey- Santa Ana youth coalition high school members and adult work of local parents speaking on topics of flavors band coalition members participating sharing public comments at the meetings- signing endorsements on a letter to the mayor banning flavors in Santa Ana
Fresno County- community action model policy system environmental change framework- conducting town halls focusing on unincorporated areas of Fresno county- far stretching throughout the county

Dr. Payán- In the past year more evidence that sales bans are effective- studies that show statewide and local level bans show they do reduce availability of flavor products

Liz- communications and marketing leading with a story is really impactful and finding ways to localize it.

Examples of community experiences:

Leila- so much vaping going on at the school and in the bathrooms before Covid that administrators closed the bathrooms for a period of time so they were not available to the students- high school- Fresno County

Bailey- parent has a daughter of high school age 15 years or so- daughter was vaping and was hiding it in her underwear even just around the house and at school to keep from her mom and it broke her heart because daughter was so addicted she went to extreme measures to hide the vaping device. Smoke shop right across the street from the high school or really close proximity.

Dr. Payán- Kids are saying it's just like drinking flavored water, ongoing confusion on what the e-liquid is.

Flavors detrimentally impact our lives, every day and in all facets of our community. We have heard stories from several of our community members that concern us. For example, a high school student in Fresno County noted that vaping was so prevalent in the bathrooms at school, that administrators closed down the bathrooms and they were unavailable to the students throughout the school day. A concerned mother with a 15-year-old daughter discussed that her child was so addicted to vaping that she went to extreme measures to hide her vaping device, including hiding it in her waistband both at home and at school. She also said there is a smoke shop right across the street from her daughter's high school and feels the proximity makes vaping that much more accessible to children. As you can see, flavors and vaping are a serious





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concern for our community. These stories are just snapshots of what transpires in our community and these voices need to be heard.

incorporate statistics and examples of what the community and organizations are doing to address tobacco policy or flavor bans- this is evidence that many in the community are concerned, enough so to take this sort of action

Our organizations include dedicated high school students and parent coalitions who are willing to speak and advocate for flavor bans. For example, in Santa Ana members of the coalition speak at town hall meetings and are actively signing a petition intended to reach the Mayor.

Breakout: 2

Notes: **Sara Fleszar**

Flavors detrimentally impact our lives, every day and in all facets of our community. We have heard stories from our community members that concern us. For example, a San Mateo County Resident who works at a Central Valley community health center hears stories from residents at a public housing residence that secondhand vaping smoke is seeping through the vents into individual units having detrimental impacts on infants and children health.

A Sacramento County resident in their early 20s has noticed a rise in the popularity of Zyn Nicotine Pouches (flavored oral nicotine pouches & lozenges) among young adults. A mental health counselor in Sacramento County hears from their students that they are in an “I don’t care” mindset since the pandemic began. They are using flavored, brightly colored disposable e-cigarettes (“puff bars”) as an avenue to distress from pandemic-related stress.

A Sacramento County resident in their early 20s has noticed a rise in the popularity of Zyn Nicotine Pouches (flavored oral nicotine pouches & lozenges) among young adults.

A Cal Fresh program member helped with the Tobacco Program in Stanislaus Country. In conducting a survey (Healthy Stores Healthy Community Survey). They found that 88% of the retailers in the county sold within 1 mile of a school. As you can see, flavors are a serious concern for our community. These stories are just snapshots of what transpires in our community and these voices need to be heard.





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Breakout: 3

Notes: **Rabia Majeed**

Flavors significantly impact our lives, every day and in all facets of our community. We have heard stories from our community members that concern us. For example, young people have started using these products more because of flavors. The flavors have increased the popularity, and it affects adults and children both directly and indirectly, for instance, resulting in addiction. In Merced County, many people in high school would indulge in hookah or vaping because they think it's cool and everybody is doing it, so they should do it to look cool. Another issue revolves around second-hand smoke. Many people don't recognize the harmful consequences of second-hand smoke unless they have information about it. It would be helpful if proper education and training could be provided to school staff and students. One of the participants in King's County also shared that retailers sell to underage children without checking their IDs. Moreover, because of the Covid situation, students use smoking to cope with stress and anxiety, and if flavors are banned, students will try to reach out for more adaptive coping. As you can see, flavors are a serious concern for our community. These stories are just snapshots of what transpires in our community, and these voices need to be heard.

Breakout: 4

Notes: **Zoe Griffith**

A) What are examples of work by the organization that addresses tobacco flavor policy. This can be at the state or local levels (including schools, cities, and counties).

As a non-profit centered on youth engagement we prioritize engaging the community through education and parental outreach. We also consult with school administrators who are often unaware of the impact adverse childhood experiences can have on adolescents and their behavior. We have adopted a trauma informed lens through which to educate the community about adolescent risk behavior. We hold town halls to spark ideas for policy with the goal of reducing adolescent smoking. During these discussions special emphasis is placed on conversations about tobacco marketing strategies and the populations that are targeted. Unfortunately, council members often shift the burden of reducing teen smoking onto local school boards and educators, which illustrates the need for larger policy change to address this issue.

B) What are examples from your community or your experience of how flavors have impact you or your community

i) It is important to identify "place".



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ii) It's also important to identify the individual's role in the community (e.g., parent, teacher, grandparent, long-time resident, business owner...)

High School students have confided in Youth Counselors that they witness their peers use nicotine products to cope with stress outside of school and often carry those habits with them into the school environment. When students see their peers vaping this normalizes smoking behavior and leads to other students vaping. Local schools have resorted to removing bathroom doors in an effort to monitor students because of the high rates of vaping. High School students have reported unknown adults loitering around the high school and passing nicotine products to students through the fence.

Additional things to consider when writing a letter, recommended by Dr. Smiley:

-Are there current policies in place? If so, how long? Any research on effectiveness and community engagement?

-Who does not endorse current policies or proposed policies? Health equity?

Breakout: 5

Notes: **William Meese**

What are some examples from your community and/or in your experience of how flavors impact you and your community?

Starting off with menthol in high school

Rural area teachers 15-year-old child victim to flavored tobacco the flavors helped her get addicted

Parents were chain smokers, mom smoked the menthol, making Christmas tamales, family gatherings, we all have respiratory issues now, dad died of lung cancer, now several of my grandchildren are vaping flavored tobacco,

Vaping flavored tobacco, children in school all know where to get it at stores, "I could tell you exactly where to get it," who will sell to them, they all know they are addicted,

When asked "where do you get the stuff" they said "we get it from the retailers [convenience stores] from parents, from the streets"

"This is a little bit dark, but there kids who are getting in trouble for offering sex to people in exchange for getting free vaping products"



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“Youth will ask other people if they can get a puff for a dollar”

Flavored tobacco products are harming our communities, especially our children. We have heard stories from our community members that are deeply concerning to us. For example, one community member shared with us that in speaking with a local probation officer, she learned about children who are “getting in trouble for offering sex to other people in exchange for free flavored tobacco vaping products.” Other kids learned that they could ask others to “get a puff if I give you a dollar.” Another community member shared that when they advocate in schools, kids will tell her that they “know where to get the stuff,” that they “get it from retailers like convenience stores, from their parents, and off the streets.” Kids have shared with community members that there are certain stores that will sell to minors, and local (rural) law enforcement appears to not care. Sharing a personal experience, one central valley community member said that her parents chained smoked menthol cigarettes; she remembered that growing up every Christmas her family would make tamales together, and her mom would smoke at the kitchen table with a giant ashtray as the centerpiece. Her dad died of lung cancer, she and all her siblings have respiratory issues, and now several of her grandchildren are vaping flavored tobacco products. We heard from local members of rural communities that even teachers are having a hard time keeping their kids away from flavored tobacco products, that their kids tell them that they want to smoke because of the flavors. We heard that kids are, surprisingly, admitting to being addicted and attribute their addiction to the availability of flavors. Evidently, flavored tobacco products are a serious concern for our community and especially for our children. These stories are small glimpses into the dark world of addiction and the harm that comes to our community from flavored tobacco. These stories need to be heard and considered when we think about how to stop the suffering caused by flavored tobacco products.

Breakout: 6

Notes: **Danielle Simpson**

Flavored tobacco products detrimentally impact our lives, every day and in all facets of our community. We have heard stories from our community members that concern us about the use of flavored tobacco products. For example, frontline workers who are trying to prevent youths from using tobacco have reported a strong prevalence among minorities and menthol cigarette use. According to the FDA, nearly 85% of African American/Black smokers, 48% of Hispanic/Latinx smokers, 41% of Asian smokers, and 30% of White smokers smoke menthol cigarettes. This data could vary among people of color born in the United States and those born abroad, indicating that menthol use is directly connected to communities who are marginalized and under-resourced. Another member reported that schools in the community are drastically impacted by flavored tobacco products, as vape pens are being used in the bathrooms and



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locker rooms. Hash tags such as #takebackthebathroom and #teammango were reported being seen written on the walls at Sonora High School, and some of these schools have installed expensive smoke detectors to prevent teens from using tobacco products. The proximity of retailers who sell these products contributes to the problem, as many are located next to schools. Another community member reported that a smoke shop near the high school in Oakdale sold flavored tobacco products to minors regularly. These local teens have reported using flavored products because they did not enjoy the taste of tobacco without the flavors. As you can see, flavors are a serious concern for our community. These stories are just snapshots of what transpires in our community and these voices need to be heard.

Breakout 7

Notes: **Jessica Balla**

Organizational Experiences

- Smoke-free work, also organizations are working on specific tobacco policy work
- Comprehensive tobacco licensing - restrictions of coupons, minimum retail price, for example - Dinuba, CA, youth sensitive
- Madera - also working on licensing - limiting menthol, minimum retail price, discounts, density, coupons
- September - banning of all flavored tobacco products proposed, but not passed by city council, mayor was supportive but could not get a hold of him

Personal Experiences

- Few months ago, Dinuba - youth coming out of school from presentation, they said they see classmates vaping in the restrooms at school
- Parents asked for presentation on vaping in youth in Spanish, may be seeing their children vaping/smoking - community members are seeing dispensaries popping up
- Community event - parents were asking about vaping, mother bought a vape for her child because her child told her it was “just vapor” and she didn’t know that wasn’t true
- Parent would see children and friends with vape pen, didn’t know it was a tobacco product and children would not say it was

Breakout 8

Notes: **Allison Temourian**

Youth: attention that flavors grab. Eye candy, kids are gravitating towards flavors
Parents are being educated on how these products look to keep an eye out. Packaging looks like candy wrappers, USB drives, etc.



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If you prefer this in the main text: In rural areas children are gravitating towards flavors and products that resemble candy wrappers and USB drives; parents continue to be educated on how these devices look to protect their youth.

Hookah use: Latino youth are more susceptible to hookah smoking. High school grad party had hookah as centerpiece for each table

Walnut will draft ordinance for flavors (city council)

Political affiliates not interested in topic of flavors and how they impact our youth

Flavors significantly impact our lives, everyday, and in all facets of our community. We have heard stories from community members that concern us. For example, in the city of Walnut, at one high school graduation party, hookahs were found to act as centerpieces in lieu of floral arrangement or other pieces. In rural areas, parents are being informed on how electronic devices look, to keep an eye out and protect their youth. At one city council meeting in Atwater, city council members were uninterested in discussing flavors and how their use impacts not only their youth, but the community as a whole. As you can see, flavors are a serious concern for our community. These stories are just snapshots of what transpires in our community, and these voices must be heard.

Breakout 9

Notes: **Thais Benoit**

Q. What are examples of work by the organization that addresses tobacco flavor policy. This can be at the state or local levels (including schools, cities, and counties).

A participant reported that her organization located at Mono county was able to pass a flavor tobacco ban in 2020.

Another participant with an organization located in Orange County shared two programs led by her organization. One program, funded by the Orange County health department, aims to reduce exposure to tobacco products for the population. A second program focuses on providing tools and education to the people of Orange County, especially adolescents and adults, so they can advocate for themselves in terms of banning tobacco flavors.

Q. What are examples from your community or your experience of how flavors have impact you or your community.





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A board member of the Mono County Education Department shared that high school students in her community have complained about the impracticality of using the schools' restrooms due to the overpowering smells of strawberries and many other tobacco flavored products. She also mentioned that her community had witnessed an increase in vaping among 5th – 6th graders. According to this participant, these kids see tobacco flavors products as ordinary, normal, and natural.

Another participant seems surprised that many students who participate in prevention programs delivered by her organization in Orange County seem to know what vaping is or claim to know at least someone who vapes in school. The same participant provided data suggesting a significant increase in the sale of tobacco flavor products in Anaheim, CA.

Flavors detrimentally impact our lives, every day and in all facets of our community. We have heard stories from our community members that concern us. For example, an Orange County resident reported that many students (teenagers) who participate in prevention programs delivered by her organization seem to know what vaping is or claim to know at least someone who vapes in school. A board member from the Mono County educational department reported that high school students in her community have complained about the impracticality of using the schools' restrooms due to the overpowering smells of strawberries and many other tobacco flavored products. She also mentioned that her community had witnessed an increase in vaping among 5th – 6th graders. According to this participant, these kids see tobacco flavor products as something normal and natural. These stories are just snapshots of what transpires in our community, and these voices need to be heard.

Breakout 10

Moderator: **Deanna Halliday**

I have a friend who is a PE teacher at Atwater and she catches people in the locker room and they hide in the showers. Most of those vapes are flavored

You go to the mall and you see teenagers vaping and you smell it in the air and it's always sweet or minty

My mom is a middle school counselor and vaping and flavors are a huge problem in the middle school because the store across the school sell disposable vape pens and the kids report they want to try them because the flavors sound so good. Now, the kids have moved on to scented aerosol! They are huffing aerosol in bathrooms





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I used to work at a convenience store and the three products we sold the most was a 40oz beer, lottery ticket, and Newport cigarettes (menthol).

40-year resident complains about packages on street, empty plastic with flavor products

Principal confiscates packages of tobacco with crazy flavors, like Lucky Charms vapes

Parent who has to have “the talk” with their 7-year-old about tobacco products and what they’ve seen in the parking lot of their school

Mother of young child reports that their kid comes home to complain that their school bus smells of weird strawberry because kids are vaping in the bus

Flavors [vividly, significantly, detrimentally] impact our lives, every day and in all facets of our community. We have heard stories from our community members that concern us. For example, a teacher in Atwater, CA reported that students are consistently vaping in the locker rooms and bathrooms and the smell permeates through the facility. Another former convenience store employee in Hanford, CA reported that the popular products are beer, lottery tickets, and Newport cigarettes (menthol), almost always bought together. A school counselor in Stanislaus reports that middle school students were accessing flavored products in the store across the street. When those products were not available, they were already addicted to those products and continued to get flavored experiences through aerosol. As you can see, flavors are a serious concern for our community. These stories are just snapshots of what transpires in our community and these voices need to be heard.

Breakout 11

Moderator: **Dr. Anna Song**

Prevalence is much greater than it used to be. I have a 17-year-old son and he told me “When he was 15, he came to me and said ‘mama, I can’t even go to the bathroom because everyone is vaping.’ He started vaping himself and has told me he wants to quit, but it’s just so hard. I’m sure it started with flavors.”

Within a few years after the Federal ban on flavored cigarettes, we saw a proliferation in menthols and lo and behold, we saw an explosion of flavored nicotine products, especially in vapes. Prior to that, we didn’t have ENDS that anyone knew about. By 2012, they were out there. And within a few years, it became an epidemic. To us, this is an example of how can ban a group of flavors, but when the policy is not comprehensive, the industry will be able to skirt laws and dive through loopholes.





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Fresno county data in high school nicotine use is at an all-time high. We've done such a good job educating the community about how negative tobacco smoke is, but somehow, the tobacco industry has pivoted and created this vaping crisis.

Breakout 12

Moderator – **Jamie Morgan**

In Madera at the HS, they had to move forward with installing smoke detector devices in the bathrooms because many students vape in bathroom. Those that don't vape feel like they need to go off campus to go to the bathroom.

Fresno - After school program coordinator for several middle schools. I saw that kids would go into restroom – and use a “community” vape pen that was on the windowsill (covered). 2-3 students would go at a time to use it. Later they found out it was marijuana and school policy does not exist on that so kids only got a “slap on the wrist.”

I tabled at Fresno State and some of the students were upset because they felt manipulated and lied to because they thought vaping was healthier and just water vapor until they were in the ER from complications with asthma or it triggered their mental health illnesses.

CA tribes - Tribal communities have different laws on tribal reservations - second and thirdhand smoke - need education around that. Need smoke-free areas

In Merced, I have seen right here at the back of our office building a group of teenagers who look like high school students who group themselves after school to smoke and vape in an open space like our parking lot here. They don't seem concerned about being out in the open.

