

# **U.S.-born African American Tobacco Pre-Survey & Key Informant Interviews Summarized Results**

**Hennepin and Ramsey Counties  
Menthol Cigarette Intervention Grant**

November 17, 2016

**Supported by the Statewide Health Improvement Program, Minnesota Department of Health**



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# Our Partners



Prepared by Hennepin County Public Health  
Assessment Team

# Evaluation Design & Method

# Evaluation questions

- What difference was made in knowledge and awareness related to the harmful effects of menthol-flavored cigarettes in targeted U.S.-born African American communities in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties?
  1. What are the changes in knowledge about the harmful effects of menthol-flavored cigarettes?
  2. What are the behavioral changes as a result of the project?
  3. What are the changes in awareness of tobacco cessation resources and services?
  4. What are the changes in awareness of targeted menthol-flavored cigarettes advertising to the African American communities?

# Evaluation questions

- To what extent did the project build the capacity of African American organizations in the targeted cities to continue project implementation?
  1. Who played a key role in driving this work? What are the changes in awareness of tobacco cessation resources and services?
  2. What were their contributions?

# Methods

- Key informant interviews were conducted from May–July, 2016
- 10 respected leaders from faith-based organizations, community organizations, and business or philanthropy were interviewed
- Their roles included a mix of executive directors, church pastors, community organizers, corporate employees, and church leaders
- All identified as U.S.-born African American adults aged 18 and over



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# Methods

- Baseline surveys were administered from May–July, 2016
- A **convenience sample** of 600 individuals that targeted U.S.-born African Americans in St. Paul, Minneapolis, Brooklyn Park, Brooklyn Center, Bloomington, Edina, and Richfield
  - Because the sample is not representative of the population, the results cannot speak for the entire population
  - The sample size will help to detect statistically significant differences at the 95% confidence level between pre- and post- survey responses
- Adults aged 18 and over completed the survey

# Methods

- Surveys were conducted in the following ways to reach U.S.-born African Americans:
  - Set up tables at churches, a community center, a wellness center, health fairs, and community events
  - Went door-to-door at houses, townhouses, and apartment buildings
  - Set up tables in community rooms at apartment buildings with high concentrations of U.S.-born African Americans
- \$10 Target/Cub store gift cards were given to participants as an incentive



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# Response rate for pre-survey

Surveys completed	# of surveys
Overall	541
U.S.-born African Americans	469
U.S.-born African Americans in our target cities	361
U.S.-born African Americans in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties	<b>407</b>

**n = 407**



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# Respondents from our target areas

	Among all respondents		Among U.S.-born African Americans	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
St. Paul	122	22.6%	108	23.0%
Minneapolis	167	30.9%	140	29.9%
Bloomington/Edina/Richfield	47	8.7%	43	9.2%
Brooklyn Center/Brooklyn Park	84	15.5%	70	14.9%
Surveys not from our target cities in Hennepin County/Ramsey County	50	9.2%	46	9.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>470</b>		<b>407</b>	
Surveys from outside Hennepin County/Ramsey County	48	8.9%	43	9.2%
Invalid zip codes	4	0.7%	4	0.9%
Blank	19		15	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>541</b>		<b>469</b>	



# Who responded?



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# Who responded?

## Gender

Twice as many females responded to the survey compared to males

- Females 68%
- Males 32%

# Who responded?

## Age of respondents

- 36% were between the ages of 18-34
- 35% were between the ages of 35-54
- 29% were ages 55 and older

# Who responded?

## Education

Most respondents (76%) have a high school education or some post-secondary and nearly a quarter (24%) have a bachelor's degree

➤ This data is comparable to the American Community Survey 5-year estimates for education attainment of Black or African American residents in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties



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# Who responded?

## Income of respondents

- 27% had annual household income of \$23,000 or less
- 28% had annual household income between \$23,001–\$55,000
- 43% had annual household income of over \$55,001

# Who responded?

## Smoking status

- 24% of the respondents were current smokers (those that smoked 100 cigarettes in their lifetime and smoke some days or every day now)
- By comparison, 21% of African Americans residing in Minnesota and 18% of Blacks (non-Hispanic) in the United States are current cigarette smokers



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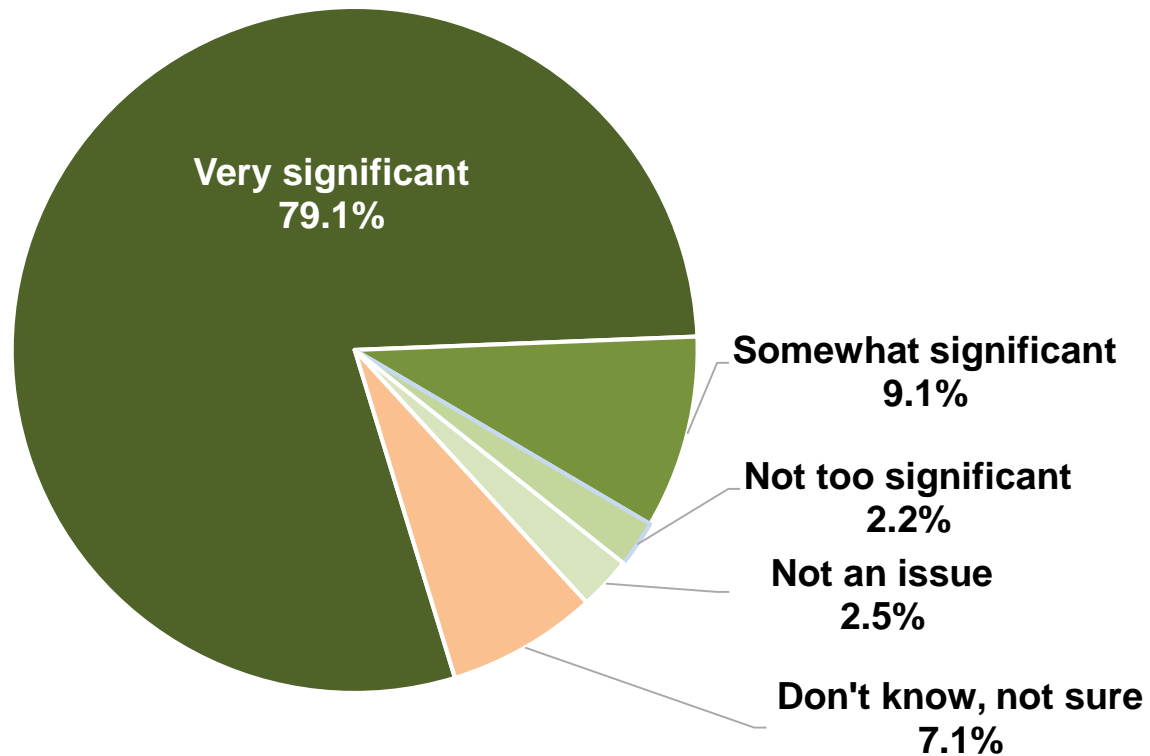


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**88% of survey respondents think tobacco use is a very significant or somewhat significant health issue in the African American community. This holds up amongst smokers and non-smokers alike.**

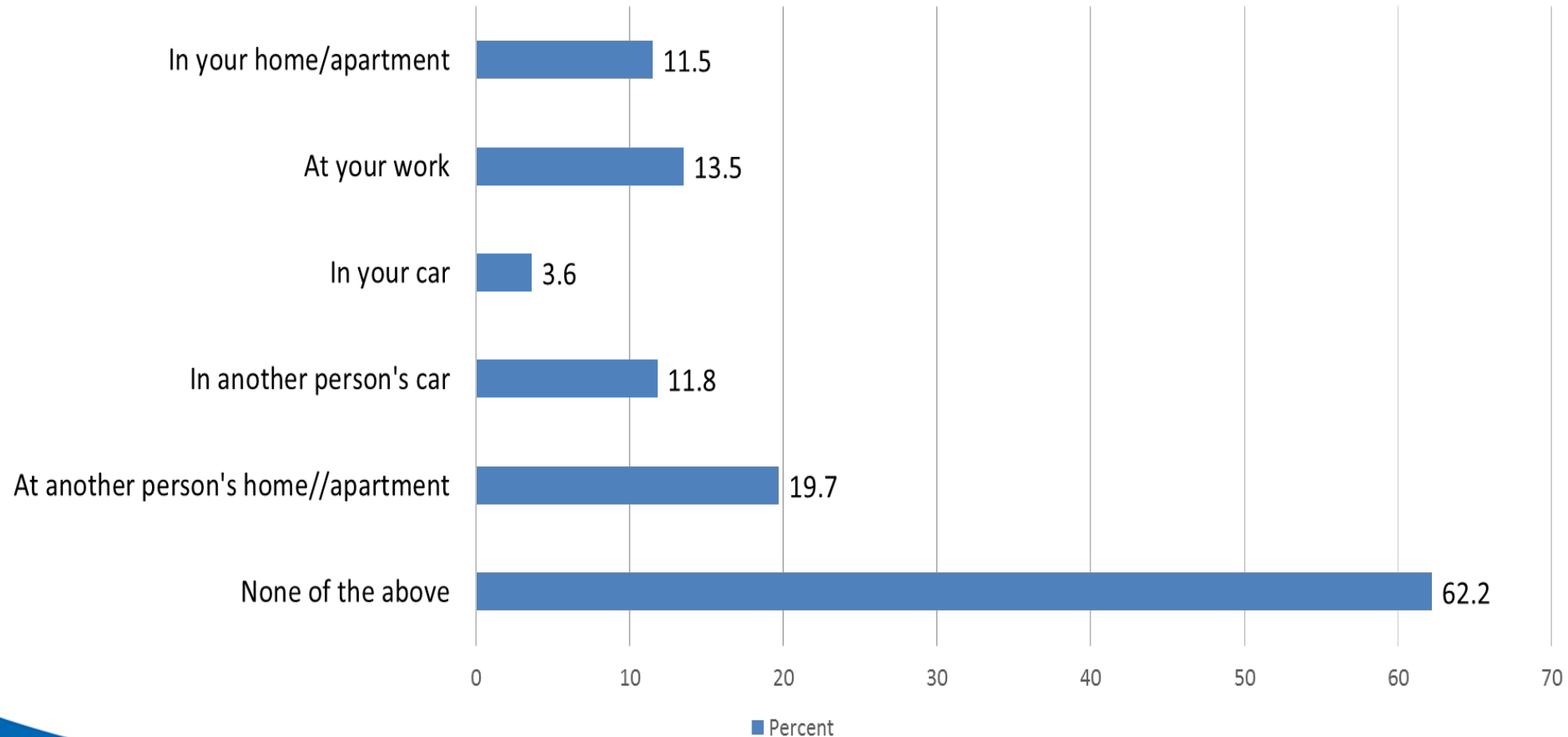
*Q. How significant of a health issue do you think tobacco use is in the African American community? (n=407)*



# Key Informants

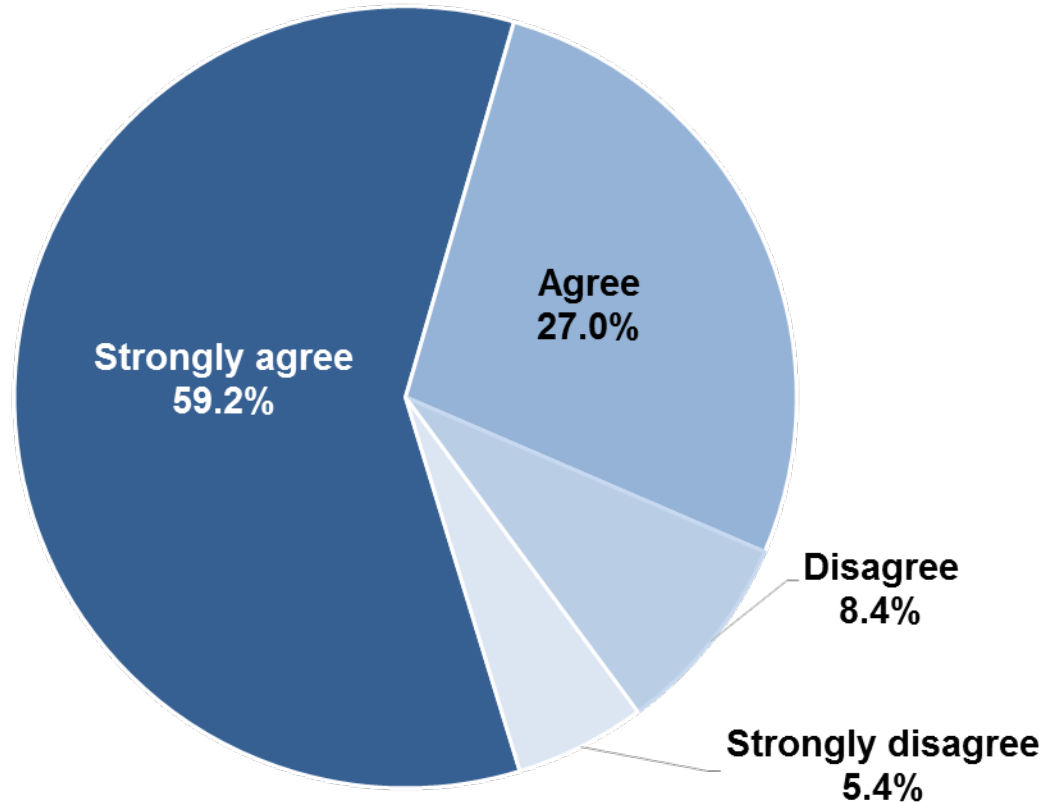
- “Very concerned” about tobacco use in community. They describe:
  - Awareness of health risks posed by smoking
  - Cigarette use as an addiction
  - Difficulty in quitting also seen as a habituated response to stress
  - Influence of family members smoking and peer pressure or influence
- Informants highlight personal connections to smoking – (self, family, friends)
  - Associate chronic diseases from smoking or secondhand smoke
  - Concerns for youth of color

## Among non-smokers: In the past 7 days, has anyone smoked near you ... (Mark all that apply.)



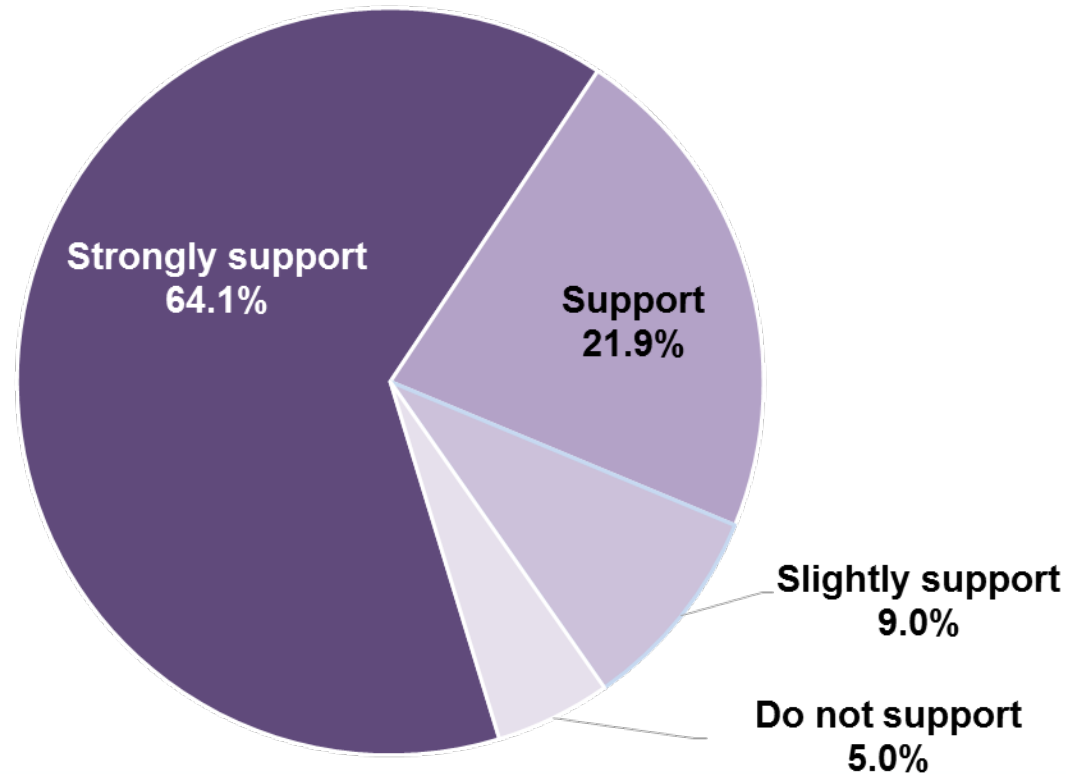
# 86% of survey respondents agree that smoke-free laws were the right decision for Minnesota

*Q. Do you believe adopting a statewide smoke-free law was the right decision for Minnesota? (n=407)*



**86% of respondents support more laws to reduce the harm of smoking – the support is higher with non-smokers (91%) BUT 69% of smokers also support more laws**

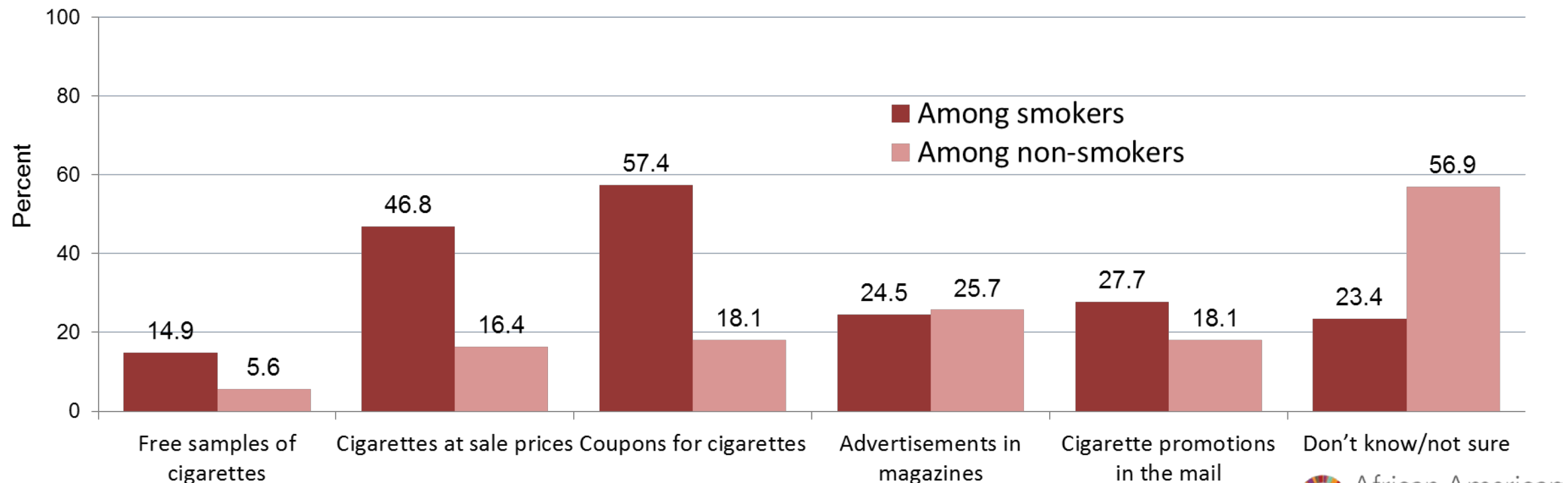
*Q. Would you support more laws that reduce the harms of smoking?  
(n=407)*



## Advertisements

- 42% of respondents noticed any advertisements or signs that promote menthol cigarettes in stores where cigarettes are sold
- 66% of smokers noticed any advertisements or signs that promote menthol cigarettes in stores where cigarettes are sold, compared to 36% of non-smokers

## Question: In the past 30 days, have you noticed any of the following types of cigarette promotions? (Mark all that apply)



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Did survey respondents  
***Agree or Disagree***  
with the following statements?



# ***Menthol cigarettes are less harmful than non-menthol cigarettes***

## **All respondents (includes smokers and non-smokers):**

- 19% agree/strongly agree
- 41% disagree/strongly disagree
- 41% don't know/not sure

## **Smokers vs. non-smokers:**

- 44% of smokers agree/strongly agree menthol cigarettes are less harmful than non-menthol cigarettes, compared to 10% of non-smokers

# Key Informants

- Expressed that the African American community is not educated on the harmful effects of menthol cigarettes or aware of predatory marketing

*“I don’t think they have the information or the correct information or not enough information that’s spread around in the community. The menthol cigarettes are just as harmful as the ones that don’t have the menthol, the regular tobacco cigarettes.” – Informant*



# ***Menthol's cooling sensation makes it easier for young people to start smoking***

## **All respondents (includes smokers and non-smokers):**

- 51% agree/strongly agree
- 10% disagree/strongly disagree
- 40% don't know/not sure

## **Smokers vs. non-smokers:**

- 69% of smokers agree/strongly agree menthol's cooling sensation makes it easier for young people to start smoking, compared to 45% of non-smokers



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## ***Menthol makes it harder for smokers to quit***

### **All respondents (includes smokers and non-smokers):**

- 56% agree/strongly agree
- 7% disagree/strongly disagree
- 37% don't know/not sure

### **Smokers vs. non-smokers:**

- 72% of smokers agree/strongly agree menthol makes it harder for smokers to quit, compared to 50% of non-smokers



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# ***Menthol cigarettes are marketed to African-Americans more than other racial groups***

## **All respondents (includes smokers and non-smokers):**

- 61% agree/strongly agree
- 12% disagree/strongly disagree
- 28% don't know/not sure

## **Smokers vs. non-smokers:**

- 71% of smokers agree/strongly agree menthol cigarettes are marketed to African-Americans more than other racial groups, compared to 58% of non-smokers



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# Key Informants

- Several mentioned predatory marketing to the African American community, noted by:
  - Prevalence and placement of products in convenience stores, gas stations, corner stores that are concentrated in African American communities
  - Heavy advertisements in these venues
- Multiple informants mentioned the change in sources of exposure to advertisements for cigarette products—from newspapers and magazines to the Internet and social media



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# Key findings from pre-survey among U.S.-born African American smokers (n=94) in Hennepin and Ramsey Counties

Among U.S.-born African American smokers,  
**84% smoke a cigarette brand that is menthol (n=79)**

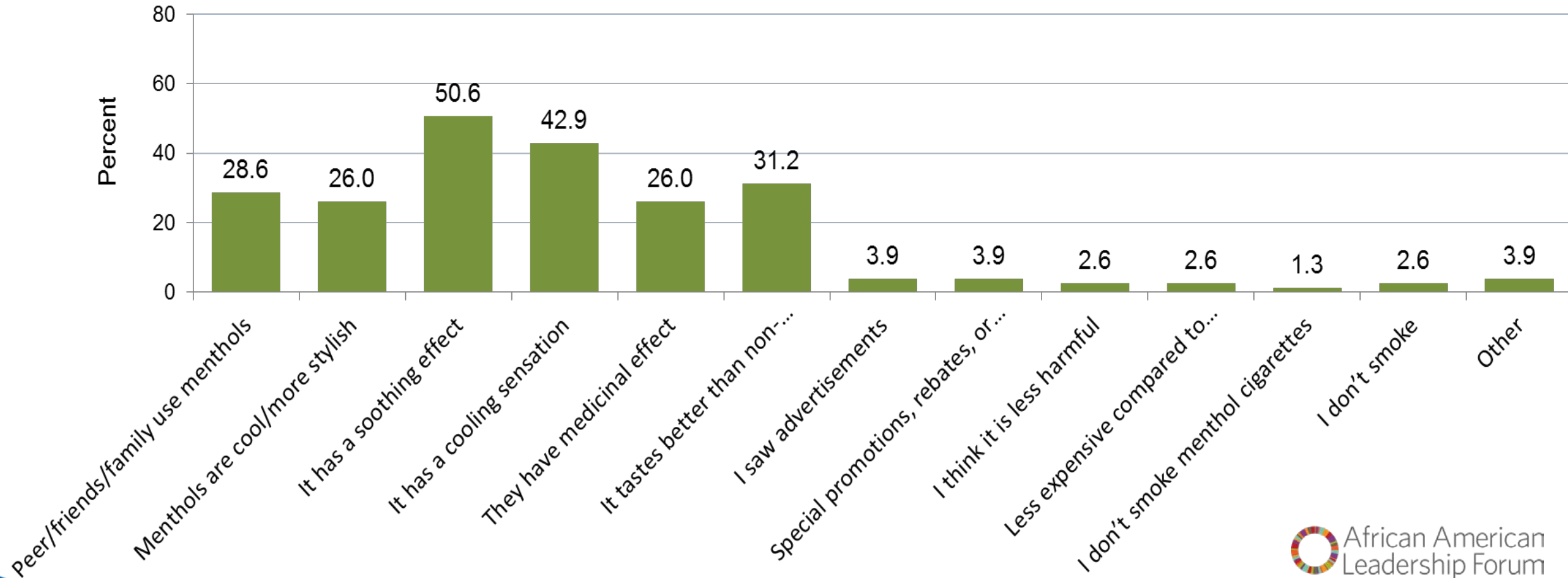
- All key informants agree that mentholated products are the tobacco products of choice in the African American community

***The question is, why?***



# Question: If menthol, why do you prefer the menthol cigarettes?

(Mark all that apply.) (Among 79 respondents who checked menthol as their usual brand)



## **Top 4 reasons why smokers prefer menthol cigarettes:**

1. Menthol has a soothing effect
2. Menthol has a cooling sensation
3. Menthol tastes better than non-menthol
4. Peers, friends, and/or family smoke menthols

# Key Informants

Discuss the association of menthol and mint:

- Informants feel menthol is expected to be inhaled more easily or is less harsh tasting than non-menthol products
- Menthol products are attractive based on their taste, familiarity, accessibility, and price



# Key Informants

Describe “peer influence” vs. “peer pressure”

- By smoking, peers give tacit endorsements of the product or model the behavior, creating a desire to belong
- Some informants describe how smoking has a cool factor, or glamor associated with smoking in their late teens/early 20s



## Among U.S.-born African American smokers ...

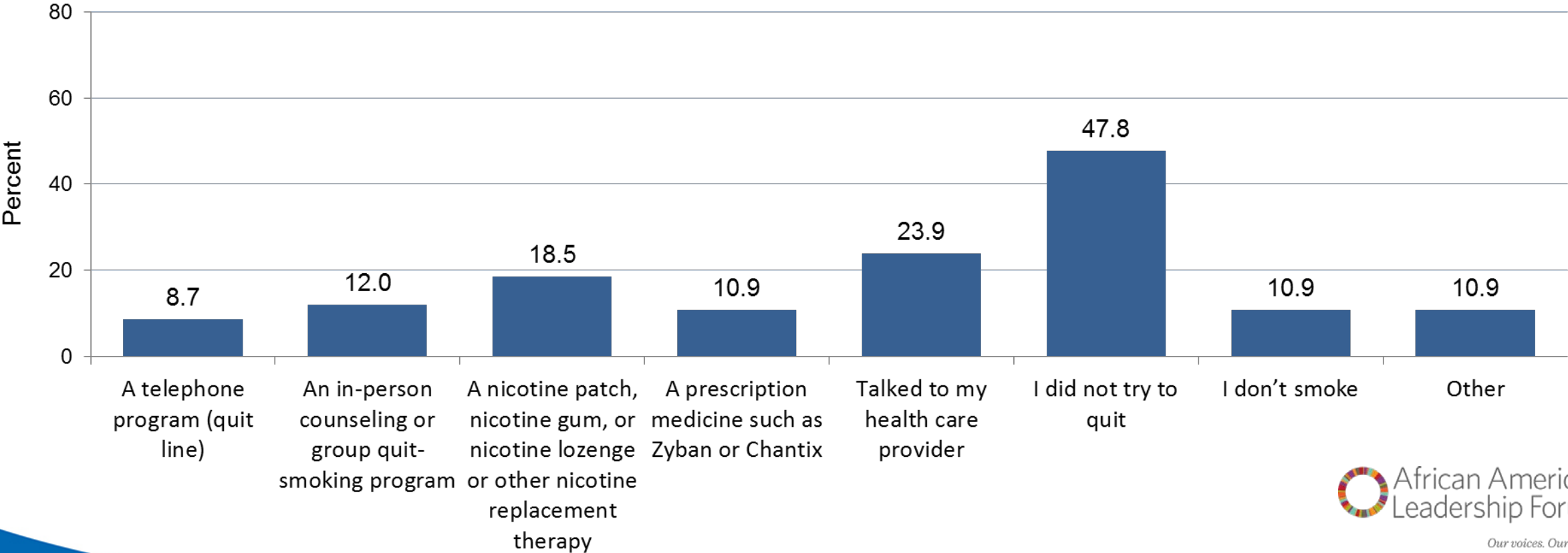
- 83% of smokers get their cigarettes from convenience stores or gas stations, 11% from supermarkets
- **60% of smokers said they would QUIT smoking if menthols were no longer sold in stores**

# Thinking about quitting?

**Among U.S.-born African American smokers ...**

- 51% have stopped smoking for one day or longer in the past 12 months because they were trying to quit smoking
- 69% know where they would go to get information or quitting resources if they wanted to quit smoking

Question: In the past 12 months, have you tried any of the following resources to help you quit smoking? (Mark all that apply.)



# If they tried to quit smoking ...

## Top 3 reasons they smoked less or quit smoking:

1. For my health
2. For my family
3. It costs too much

## Top 3 reasons they tried to quit smoking and weren't successful:

1. The craving to quit smoking was too strong
2. I was not ready to quit yet
3. Many of my friends and family still smoke



# Key Informants

Observations on prevention and resources

- Aware of community groups that address tobacco use:
  - AALF, Anti-tobacco coalitions, QUITPLAN campaigns, U of M
- Cessation resources don't appear to be readily available in U.S.-born African American community compared to other communities
- Quitting resources are not culturally relevant
  - Aiming resources to the “general public” is culturally irrelevant
  - Reluctance to talk about quitting with others outside of their racial group
- Crave culturally appropriate services and approach



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# Thank you!

## Contact information:

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Health & Wellness Group

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