

# Press Release...



FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

**For Immediate Release:**  
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**For More Information:**  
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## Ford Supports Mayor Emanuel's Call to the FDA to Take Action on Menthol-Flavored Cigarettes

**CHICAGO** – Today, State Representative La Shawn K. Ford (D- Chicago) expressed his support for Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel's call to the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to take strong action to reduce the usage of menthol cigarettes among young people.

Of the four town hall meetings held in Chicago on the issue, Ford co-hosted one of the meetings with the Chicago Department of Public Health at Austin Town Hall on September 19, 2013. More than 200 community members and content experts explored new ways to reduce menthol use at the town hall meetings. As a result of the town hall meetings and with support increasing for taking action on menthol-flavored cigarettes, in a letter to the FDA this morning, Mayor Emanuel discussed specific risks menthol-flavored cigarettes pose to youth and asks the FDA to consider all options to limit their use, including an increased focus on warning labels, asserting its authority over other forms of flavored tobacco, investing additional funds in education, and even an outright ban.

"We applaud the City of Chicago and Mayor Emanuel for taking steps to protect young people from the hazards of menthol tobacco," said Ford. "I applaud the Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Public Health Dr. Bechara Choucair and his staff and the Chair of the Chicago Board of Health Dr. Carolyn Lopez and other members of the Board for coming to Austin to reach out to the community, present their information and hear the voices of the people. This is how government should work," said Ford. "As one of the policies being considered, we should consider changing the law in Illinois so a person needs to be 21 to buy a menthol-flavored cigarette," said Ford.

According to the U.S. Surgeon General, 88% of all adult smokers pick up their first cigarette while they were still in their teens or younger. Mayor Emanuel also notes that among African American youth ages 12-17 who smoke, 72% use menthol cigarettes and among LGBT youth, 71% use menthol.

"Smoking kills people, and menthol cigarettes are, quite simply, a vehicle to attract and addict more smokers," said Mayor Emanuel. "We need to take every action and every step possible to help our children to live long, healthy lives as tobacco-free adults, and eliminating the use of menthol cigarettes is a critical step."

Next month, CDPH will publish a comprehensive report detailing the community findings and include policy recommendations to help Mayor Emanuel create a more comprehensive menthol tobacco abatement strategy.

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Town Hall Meeting Concerning Menthol Cigarettes –September 19, 2013  
Co-hosted by State Representative La Shawn K. Ford and the Chicago Department of Public Health  
Testimony received by the Chicago Board of Health

For more information, contact one of Ford’s constituent service offices: 816 S. Oak Park Avenue in Oak Park at [708-445-3673](tel:708-445-3673), 4800 W. Chicago Avenue in Chicago at [773-378-5902](tel:773-378-5902) or in the Stratton Office Building in Springfield at [217-782-5962](tel:217-782-5962), or visit [www.lashawnford.com](http://www.lashawnford.com).