

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITIES CONNECTED AND ENGAGED

From the Director's Desk

Issue 25, May 2022

May is Women's Health, Brain Tumor Awareness and No Menthol Sunday Observance Month



Happy Mother's Day to all moms, grandmothers, aunts and more! Mothers **protect, share and understand**. These qualities are carried throughout our work in cancer prevention and control.

Let's continue to **protect** our families and communities from the leading cause of preventable death in the U.S. – tobacco use. The Center for Black Health & Equity's No Menthol Sunday is May 15. This annual observance day helps to increase awareness how tobacco and menthol contribute to

the high burden of disease and death in our communities. Good news! The Food & Drug Administration is taking steps to prohibit flavors like menthol. Please read more about this big win later in the newsletter.

Share information and community resources about lifesaving cancer screenings. May is Women's Health Month. Our theme this year is Schedule, Screen and Share. We encourage all women to schedule their cancer screenings, get screened and share with family

and friends that "early detection saves lives."

Brain Tumor Awareness Month is also in May. We hope to increase the **understanding** of brain tumors, symptoms and seeking care when symptoms occur.

As you continue your roles as coordinators, community health advisors, partners and staff, remember to take time to enjoy Mother's Day and graduation celebrations this month. Be well!

— *Francine*



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THE FACTS

WOMEN'S HEALTH

- Breast cancer screening starts at age 40 with a mammogram.
- Cervical cancer screening should include a regular Pap and/or HPV test starting at age 25.
- Talk with your doctor about what is right for you.

— American Cancer Society

MENTHOL/TOBACCO

- Menthol is a minty flavor that makes it easier to start smoking and harder to quit.
- On April 29, 2021, the FDA committed to issuing a new standard that would ban menthol as flavors in cigarettes and cigars.
- The tobacco industry pays Black leaders to say that a ban on menthol would criminalize African Americans, but this is not true.

— Center for Black Health & Equity

No Menthol Sunday

Bold Awareness: Fight to the Finish

Source: Center for Black Health & Equity

No Menthol Sunday is the Center for Black Health & Equity's annual faith-based observance day. It is an opportunity to engage faith communities in tough conversations about how menthol and tobacco addiction have robbed us of community health for generations.

The tobacco industry has stripped our community's finances, engaged in targeted unethical marketing and attempted to dupe young people with flavors like spearmint and menthol. Industry executives have said that they don't smoke their own deadly products—they reserve that right for "the young, the poor, the Black and stupid."

Now, after a decadeslong battle for health justice in tobacco control, we are embarking upon a major win. In 2022, we anticipate

that the Food & Drug Administration will finally issue standard regulations that will prohibit the sale of tobacco products with any characterizing flavors like menthol. This is historic! Just as it was written in Isaiah 55:11, "we are now seeing the fulfillment of what we had long set out to accomplish".

While we expect total victory, we know we can also expect opposition from every side. That means we must prepare for a bare-knuckle final fight to the finish. No longer will we stand for shallow arguments or the social systems that have perpetuated health disparities and kept tobacco use the status quo.

Faith communities can secure support within their congregations by ensuring they understand the benefits of this needed policy

change. We've got to be bolder and more confident than ever in our efforts to raise awareness. This will require fearless determination and final-round intensity.

Use No Menthol Sunday 2022 to trample the opposition. The No Menthol Sunday toolkit will equip participants with strategies and talking points to be bold in this final fight against tobacco.

Decades of work are now coming to fruition, and we must maintain momentum until it is accomplished. Don't be afraid to get in the ring. We've already won.



TO
DOWNLOAD
TOOLKIT
SCAN ME



Visit nomentholsunday.org to download your toolkit today!



 **SCHEDULE**






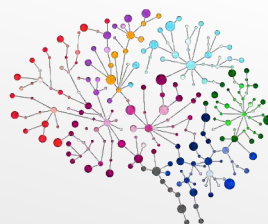
 **SCREEN**



 **SHARE**



-  Schedule appropriate screenings. Speak to your doctor about what is right for you.
-  Be sure to get regular Pap and/or HPV screenings starting at age 25 and mammograms beginning at age 40.
-  Share the important message, "Early detection saves lives," with three to five friends.



MAY IS BRAIN TUMOR AWARENESS MONTH

- Brain tumors occur in adults and children.
- Brain tumors can be cancerous or non-cancerous.
- Symptoms can include headaches; vision, hearing or balance problems; numbness, facial paralysis, seizures or memory loss.
- Keep in mind that these symptoms can happen with other conditions that are not brain tumors.
- If you have any signs or symptoms, be sure to see your doctor.

RESEARCH CORNER

Alterations of Fructose Metabolism in Obesity-Related Cancer



Sunil Sudarshan, M.D.

Professor, UAB Heersink School of Medicine, Department of Urology

The Office of Community Outreach & Engagement and the Experimental Therapeutics Research Program of the O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB have collaborated on a yearlong pilot program to support the translational research continuum from basic science to community health.

Sunil Sudarshan, M.D., was one of four trainees who completed the training program and selected to receive funding. Sudarshan was awarded a \$100,000 grant to collect pilot data centered on fructose metabolism in obesity-related cancers.

The intake of fructose corn syrup has significantly increased in the American diet over the past three decades. This has paralleled the dramatic rise in obesity in the United States. The prevalence of obesity is more than 40% in the U.S. and is expected to increase further. Obesity has been associated with an increased risk of developing various cancers.

Sudarshan's team, which includes scientist, Dr. HyeYoung Nam, focused on kidney cancer which is among the 10 most common cancers in the U.S. The study demonstrated that kidney cancer cells have alterations in their ability to break down fructose, which led the team to consider the impact of fructose on the growth of renal cancer cells. Initially, fructose

reduced the growth of cancer cells.

However, when cells were allowed to adapt over time, there was a completely different result. Notably, the presence of fructose promoted the growth of renal cancer cells. This data suggests that fructose may have a role in tumor growth.

Sudarshan's team will continue to examine the impact of fructose and its metabolism on tumor growth using animal models. The data from this study is relevant to other tumor types that may have alterations in fructose metabolism. Sudarshan anticipates that additional studies will yield new insights into the role of fructose in cancers linked to obesity.

"We anticipate our studies will yield new insights into the role of fructose in cancers linked to obesity."

— Sunil Sudarshan, M.D.

UPCOMING EVENT

*The O'Neal Comprehensive Cancer Center at UAB
Office of Community Outreach & Engagement presents*

UNDERSTANDING BRAIN TUMORS

WITH GUEST SPEAKER

Burt Nabors, MD

Director, Division of Neuro-Oncology
Vice Chair for Research
UAB Department of Neurology

TUESDAY, MAY 24, 2022
5:30 PM | Join via Zoom or Conference Call

REGISTER:
go.uab.edu/coe-braintumors

UAB MEDICINE

O'NEAL COMPREHENSIVE
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