

# New research reveals key steps to fight flavored tobacco

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Credit: Truth Initiative

Restrictions on flavored tobacco products are a great way to promote public health, and these restrictions work best if public health experts form partnerships with tobacco retailers, run intensive media campaigns, and advocate for comprehensive bans on the products. That's according to a study published in *Tobacco Control* from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Office of Public Health Studies researchers.

For the study, UH researchers interviewed experts from across the U.S. and Canada who had firsthand experience in passing, implementing or evaluating bans on flavored [tobacco products](#). The researchers then analyzed the interviews for common themes.

"We wanted to identify the best ways to implement flavored tobacco policies," said lead author Katey Peck, who was a UH Mānoa [public health](#) graduate student at the time of the study. Peck and her co-authors asked experts about the [economic impacts](#), lessons learned and unforeseen consequences of implementing restrictions.

## Study findings

One key finding was that comprehensive bans on the products were more effective and easier to enforce than partial bans. Partial bans might allow sales of menthol flavored products to continue or sales to proceed at retailers located within a certain distance from schools.

"The experts agreed that comprehensive bans are better because the rules are simpler. The sale of flavored tobacco products is not allowed, period," Peck said. "With comprehensive bans, tobacco retailers don't wind up in situations where they are trying to answer questions from customers."

Another important finding was that media campaigns that raise awareness of the health impacts of flavored tobacco products and educate the public on the details of any new policy proposals were essential to successfully implementing new policies.

"Flavored tobacco products are risky, and the experts we talked to emphasized the importance of providing accurate, [factual information](#) to the public about the known risks of these products," Peck said.

The experts also said public health advocates should treat tobacco retailers as partners in establishing new policies, rather than as businesses that need to be regulated. Moreover, tapping the knowledge held by retailers, who encounter the tobacco-buying public every day, can help public health advocates to create appropriate educational materials for their local populations.

"The regulation of flavored tobacco products is a new and growing area of public health," Peck added. "Our study showed that gathering information from experts and asking them to identify and share their ideas about [best practices](#) has potential to improve the implementation and efficacy of flavored [tobacco](#) policies."

**More information:** Katherine Peck et al. Identifying best practices in adoption, implementation and enforcement of flavored tobacco product restrictions and bans: lessons from experts, *Tobacco Control* (2020).  
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