



BLACK WOMEN'S HEALTH IMPERATIVE

Developing Engaging Health Equity Campaigns to Engage Students in Conversations About Tobacco Use

April 2022



About BWHI

- Founded in 1983, the oldest national organization dedicated solely to improving the health and wellness of our nation's 21 million Black women and girls – physically, emotionally, and financially.
- **OUR MISSION**
 - To lead the effort to solve the most pressing health issues that affect Black women and girls in the U.S. Through investments in evidence-based strategies, we deliver bold new programs and advocate health-promoting policies.
- We believe that all Black Women and Girls should enjoy optimal health and well-being in a socially just society.





History of Big Tobacco and the Black Community

- Carefully executed a cross-sector campaign to infiltrate the Black community with menthol cigarettes.
- Transformation of menthol cigarettes into a "Black cigarette" – Noted as a great marketing coup of the 20th century.
- Known for wielding its tremendous wealth and power to target Black women with advertising themes related to sex appeal, independence, stylishness, and power.
- Leveraged COVID-19 pandemic-related impacts like depression and anxiety, to increase marketing tactics resulting in increased use of tobacco products—first in decades.



Our Approach

- **Create a movement** that ignites urgency and awareness of the impacts of tobacco use on the physical and emotional health of young Black women.
- **Empower young Black women** to put themselves and their health first by leading with their knowledge and collective voice to combat the work of Big Tobacco.
- **Engage influencers** through traditional, digital, and social media platforms to endorse tobacco/vaping control on HBCU campuses and in surrounding communities as part of a comprehensive response to achieving optimal health and wellness for Black women and girls.
- **Advocate** for HBCUs, their students, and the communities they call home through social and racial justice reform against smoking, through the launch of a cause-marketing campaign.

Tobacco Industry Impact on Black Women 30 and Under

- 2/3 respondents have used tobacco products
 - 1 in 5 are daily users
 - Cited taste as the primary reason for using menthol or flavored tobacco products
 - More than half cited retail point of sale advertisements as the primary way they learned about tobacco products
 - 70% cited point of sale advertisements and social media as vehicles introducing them to tobacco products
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SEE-US Program Overview

(Socially, Emotionally, Empowered–Unapologetically Smoke-Free)

- Educates, trains, and mobilizes Women on Historically Black College and University (HBCU) campuses in the fight against smoking and vaping.
- Partner HBCUs are in the heart of “Tobacco Nation” --- Alabama State University, Dillard University, Jackson State University, Mississippi Valley State University, Southern University, Tennessee State University, and Tuskegee University
- Created in direct response to the predatory marketing tactics of the tobacco/vaping industry that targets young Black women
- SEE-US is raising awareness that smoking-related illnesses are the number one cause of death in the Black community, surpassing all other causes of death, including AIDS, diabetes, cancer, and heart disease.

Let's Clear the Air

Listening Sessions

- Gives HBCU students a platform to share their perspectives and realities about tobacco products, and the culture that surrounds them.
 - Is a forum to discuss the generational, rise, and decline of habitual tobacco use, how isolation and stress during COVID contribute to consequential smoke-related health issues, and more.
 - Provides BWHI with direct insight into the dynamics between Big Tobacco and young Black women.
 - Sessions will result in a report of the findings.
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Recommendations

- Do your homework
- Involve young adults in your planning
- Ensure all content is communicated with cultural competence
- Be relevant and understand their world
- Develop fun and engaging programming
- Remember your audience and the depth and breadth of what they endured during the COVID-19 Pandemic
- Seek integrated solutions with the wraparound supports young adults need and desire