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### **3rd Annual Faith In Health Collaborative Summit Calls Community to Action for Smoke-Free Living in 2026**

**Sacramento, CA** – The SOL Project proudly presents the **3rd Annual Faith In Health Collaborative Summit**, convening faith leaders, community groups, public health professionals, youth advocates, and property managers under the powerful 2026 theme:

***“Black Health in 2026: Strengthening Our Future Through Smoke-Free Living and Community Care.”***

The Summit will take place on **Thursday, February 26, 2026, from 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at Sierra Health Foundation, 1320 Garden Highway, Sacramento, CA.**

This year’s gathering is intentionally designed to equip and mobilize trusted community messengers and decision-makers—including pastors, ministry leaders, grassroots advocates, healthcare professionals, youth leaders, and housing stakeholders—with tools and strategies to strengthen smoke-free environments across Sacramento County.

As the tobacco industry continues to disproportionately target Black communities and other vulnerable populations through predatory marketing and addiction-driven profits, the Summit issues a clear and urgent call to action: protect our homes, safeguard our youth, and reinforce smoke-free protections where families live, gather, worship, and grow.

In multi-unit housing environments such as apartments, condos, and townhomes, smoke does not remain confined to one unit—it travels through ventilation systems, walls, hallways, and shared spaces. Property managers and housing leaders play a critical role in advancing smoke-free policies that prevent secondhand exposure, reduce early addiction, and preserve long-term health and economic stability for residents.

Serving as Master of Ceremonies, **Dr. Thomas Hopkins**, respected internal medicine physician and former Chief Medical Correspondent for KCRA 3, emphasized the power of individual and collective decision-making:

“Choosing to keep your home smoke-free is one of the most powerful decisions you can make for your family’s health. The air inside our homes should heal us—not harm us—and that starts with each of us committing to protect the spaces where we live and love.”

The Summit’s keynote address will be delivered by **Gregory Bolden**, Community Initiatives Program Manager at the Center for Black Health & Equity, who brings more than three decades of leadership in chronic disease prevention and community organizing. Bolden calls for bold action on menthol products that have heavily impacted Black communities:



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“Giving up menthol cigarettes or vaping isn’t just about breaking a habit—it’s about reclaiming our health and our power. For far too long, menthol products have been used to target our communities, and now is the time to choose freedom over addiction.”

The program also features national and state policy leaders advancing tobacco prevention and health equity.

**Eric Batch**, National Vice President of Advocacy Outreach and Partnerships at the American Heart Association, has helped lead some of California’s most consequential public health victories—from the landmark Prop 56 tobacco tax increase to Proposition 31 which upheld California’s ban on flavored tobacco products, protecting young people and communities by keeping menthol and other flavored products off store shelves.

“Real change happens where policy meets people. When communities come together with purpose and power, bold policies follow—policies that save lives and shape healthier futures.”

Additionally, **Ryon Everidge**, a Los Angeles -based spoken word artist, whose impactful work “What Would They Say?” and “I Already Know” have received international recognition from the Anthem Awards, underscores the urgency of confronting menthol tobacco’s impact. The recognition of his spoken word pieces by the Anthem Awards highlights the urgent need to confront the devastating impact of menthol tobacco in our communities.

As Ryon states: “My poetry is a call to action — a way to protect our young people and ensure Big Tobacco is finally held accountable.”

Through dynamic panel discussions and resource sessions, participants will gain practical tools, policy insights, and connections to strengthen the safety net for Sacramento County residents. The Summit will also promote free quit-smoking and vaping support services through Kick It California, ensuring attendees leave equipped to share resources within their congregations, networks, housing communities, and youth programs.

At the heart of the Faith In Health Collaborative Summit is community care—the shared responsibility to create environments where health is protected, resources are accessible, neighbors are valued, and policies reflect dignity, equity, and safety for all.

This impactful event would not be possible without the generous support of our valued sponsors and supporters:

- African American Tobacco Control Leadership Council
- American Heart Association
- Anthem
- Center for Black Health & Equity
- Sac County Tobacco Education & Prevention Program
- Sierra Donor Services



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- Tobacco Cessation Policy Research Center

Together, these partners help advance smoke-free protections and protect future generations.

The Faith In Health Collaborative Summit is part of The SOL Project's ongoing commitment to **Saving Our Legacy** by promoting smoke-free safe places and advancing equitable health outcomes in Black communities.

For more info and to see all of our Summit Speakers go to: <https://thesolproject.com/faith-in-health-collaborative/>

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#### **About The SOL Project**

Saving Our Legacy: African Americans for Smoke-Free Safe Places (The SOL Project) advocates for healthy, smoke-free communities for African Americans and other populations disproportionately impacted by tobacco use and social inequities. The SOL Project works to advance policies that reduce exposure to secondhand smoke, support smoke-free multi-unit housing and outdoor public spaces, address social determinants of health, and expand access to culturally responsive education and free cessation resources through partnerships with faith-based and community organizations.

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