



News Release

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Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community Campaign Survey Results Released

Where can you buy malt liquor, cigarillos, flavored alcohol, even condoms? Probably at most retail stores – with much of it marketed to youth.

This finding and many more was released today as part of the *Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community Survey*, a statewide initiative among tobacco/alcohol prevention and nutrition partners working to improve the health of Californians by spotlighting the impacts of unhealthy product marketing in the retail environment. Three categories of products – tobacco, alcohol and food - were analyzed together, along with a new item: condoms.

Healthy Stores/Healthy Community surveys were conducted at 7,100 retail outlets, including convenience, supermarket, liquor, tobacco, small market, discount, drug and big-box stores in all 58 California counties.

Alameda County Public Health Department (ACPHD) conducted 510 surveys in 2016, up from 300 in 2014. The department added an over-sample survey comparing affluent and high-poverty retail outlets to glean if a community's economic status altered the retail environment.

“We are deeply concerned about health equity in our communities,” remarked ACPHD Director and Health Officer Dr. Muntu Davis. “The amount of unhealthy food and drinks being sold in stores and advertised in our communities contributes to high rates of chronic diseases and premature deaths.”

ACPHD looked at store observation data and compared the availability of products in affluent neighborhoods (less than 10% living below federal poverty rate) with availability in very high poverty neighborhoods (more than 20% of persons living below federal poverty rate). The data was compared to results from three years ago.

There's good news and bad. Among our key findings:

- Overall, unhealthy and youth-friendly tobacco, alcohol and food products are widely available in stores regardless of neighborhood.
- In the past three years, the price of youth-attractive single little cigars decreased across most neighborhoods (affluent: \$1.06 to \$0.90; very high poverty: \$0.91 to \$0.83).
- Stores in very high poverty neighborhoods sell single little cigars for less than they are offered in affluent neighborhoods.
- Youth-attractive flavored tobacco products (sweet, fruit, candy, liquor, mint) remain widely available, but availability increased in high poverty neighborhoods (84% to 90%) while decreasing in affluent neighborhoods (88% to 83%).

- Stores in both affluent and very high poverty neighborhoods saw a decline in the percent of stores that sell such healthy food options as non-fat milk, whole wheat bread, and quality fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Overall, the percent of stores in both affluent and very high poverty areas that sell alcohol had a decline in products (e.g. alcopops) that are often appealing to underage persons.
- A decline was seen in stores in both neighborhood categories in the percent of stores that have alcohol ads within three feet of candy or toys, 46% to 21% (affluent) and 47% to 17% (very high poverty).

“Our increased health awareness is often offset by the tobacco and food industries’ success at finding new products and ways to market them, particularly to youth,” Davis said. “Vigilance is key.”

For state, regional and county specific data and more information on *Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community*, visit www.HealthyStoresHealthyCommunity.com.

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