



# County of Fresno

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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### NEWS RELEASE

Public Health Communication  
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## Survey finds that Flavored Tobacco Products are Easier to Access than Fruits and Vegetables in the Fresno County

Results of a statewide survey on the retail environment and its impact on health indicate that increased availability of discounted flavored tobacco products near schools and lack of access to fruits and vegetables could adversely affect the health of young people in Fresno County. The survey, conducted from May through June 2016, collected information from more than 7,100 stores in all 58 California counties. Findings are part of new data released today on the availability and marketing of tobacco and alcohol products, as well as for healthy and unhealthy food products, in stores that sell tobacco.

State, regional, and county-specific data gathered in the survey provides insight on several key points. These include: (1) proximity of stores that sell tobacco near school sites; (2) types of tobacco and alcohol products sold including electronic smoking devices; (3) advertising and placement of tobacco and alcohol products in stores; and (4) availability and promotion of healthy and unhealthy food options.

Survey results reveal that nearly 90% of Fresno County tobacco retail stores located near schools sell Swisher Sweets (little cigars) for less than \$1.00. Only 42% surveyed Fresno County stores sell any fresh fruits and vegetables. In Fresno County, approximately 77% of surveyed stores that sell flavored tobacco products are located near schools.

The availability of inexpensive and flavored tobacco products can increase the number of smokers, particularly among young people. Purchasing decisions and lifestyle choices established in youth can lay a foundation for good health in years to come, or could lead to obesity, chronic disease and even death.

"Flavored tobacco products, the relatively inexpensive pricing of individual little cigars, the paucity of fresh fruits and vegetables in our stores, all are threats to good health. We are not going to be a healthy community until healthful products are made affordable and accessible, and are marketed at least as well as are unhealthful products, especially with regard to our youth," states Dr. Ken Bird, Fresno County Department of Public Health Officer.

*Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community* is a statewide collaborative effort among partners in tobacco prevention, alcohol prevention, nutrition, and STD prevention to improve the health of Californians through change in the retail environment.

For state, regional, and county-specific data and more information on *Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community*, please visit [www.healthystoreshealthycommunity.com](http://www.healthystoreshealthycommunity.com)

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#### ***Promotion, preservation and protection of the community's health***

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