



**For Immediate Release**  
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## **LA Region Survey Finds Alcohol and Tobacco Products Are Still More Available than Milk and Fresh Fruit at Local Markets**

Families face a continued lack of access to healthier foods, beverages, and condoms at stores surveyed compared to a baseline survey in 2014

LOS ANGELES – Health officials from Los Angeles County, Long Beach, Pasadena, and Orange County, unveiled new survey findings regarding the availability and marketing of tobacco, alcohol, and food products in local corner stores and food markets across the Los Angeles region. The survey results found that stores located near schools still promoted and sold more unhealthy products, such as tobacco and alcohol, than they did healthier products.

“Across the region, we have made significant strides in reducing tobacco use and encouraging families to drink more water and fewer sugary drinks. However, in many of our neighborhoods where significant disparities exist between who gets sick and who stays healthy, we have stores that serve our communities with overwhelmingly high rates of tobacco and alcohol products,” said Dr. Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.Ed., Director, Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. “When these stores are located near schools and the stores promote unhealthy food and beverage offerings, our children have a more difficult time making the healthy choice the easy choice.”

The expanded availability of e-cigarettes are of particular concern and reflect a spike in teen use and young adults over the past three years. For example, the number of stores that sell e-cigarettes increased 34% since the 2014 survey results. The survey also found that 87% of stores that sell cigarillos, or little cigars, sell individually wrapped versions for under \$1, incentivizing this popular item for easy purchase by youth.

### **Survey highlights for the Los Angeles region:**

- 78% of stores sold flavored tobacco products, such as little cigars, smokeless tobacco, and e-cigarettes, in kid-appealing flavors like grape, chocolate, and watermelon
- Alcopops often packaged in containers that look like juice pouches and include kid-appealing names like “slushies,” “blast,” and “sour apple” are sold at 63% of stores that sell alcohol
- 78% of stores near schools also sold flavored tobacco products, many sold for less than a candy bar
- More than 42% of stores had alcohol advertisements placed at kid-friendly locations (below three feet) or were placed near items such as candy or toys
- 39% of stores near schools featured tobacco marketing in kid-friendly locations
- 79% of surveyed stores sold condoms, but only 22% sold them on unlocked shelves, creating a barrier to easy access to safe sex protection

- 68% of stores near schools had unhealthy storefront ads

Knowing that local markets and corner stores play a critical role in serving communities that don't have large markets, the region's health departments are working alongside retailers and community groups to balance the offerings and marketing messages young people see in stores they frequent.

This survey is part of a statewide "Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community" campaign to raise awareness about the impact of unhealthy product marketing and to promote positive changes in the retail environment to support healthier communities. Information was collected in the summer of 2016 from more than 7,100 stores in all 58 California counties including pharmacies, supermarkets, delis, convenience and liquor stores as well as tobacco-only stores.

For state 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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