



## Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency

*Healthy People, Healthy Communities*

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### For Immediate Release

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### Survey Shows Progress in Reducing Unhealthy Storefront Advertisements

**Ukiah, CA – March 8, 2017** New research shows that stores in Mendocino County that display unhealthy storefront ads dropped from **63%** in 2013 to **52%** in 2016. Similarly, the percentage of storefronts with alcohol ads fell from **59%** to **48%**. These findings are part of research results released today on the availability and marketing of tobacco products, alcohol, condoms and healthy and unhealthy food options in California stores that sell tobacco.

Today, throughout California, health advocates held 13 press events to release results of the scientific survey, which is the largest of its kind. It builds upon an initial research released three years ago in March 2014, and provides insights into changes in the availability and marketing of the studied products during this time. Information collected in the summer of 2016 from more than 7,100 stores in all 58 California counties included pharmacies, supermarkets, delis, convenience and liquor stores, as well as tobacco-only stores.

“Although the reduced storefront advertising for unhealthy products is encouraging, the overall findings show a continuing and alarming discrepancy in our county in accessibility and marketing between products that promote a healthy lifestyle, and those that don’t,” said Judy Judd, the Project Director for the Tobacco Control Program of Mendocino County Health & Human Services (HHS), Public Health Branch. “Stores play a critical role on our community’s health, and this survey shows offerings and messaging are out of balance, tipping heavily toward unhealthy options. *Our goal is to help re-calibrate the balance toward health.*”

#### The survey found the following for Mendocino County:

- In addition to selling cigarettes, **79%** of stores sell “little cigars” or cigarillos, but only **37%** of stores sell fresh fruits or vegetables. What’s more, **29%** of stores sell a popular brand of “little cigars” individually for under a dollar, less than the cost of a candy bar.
- Only **40%** of stores sell non- or low-fat milk, but nearly **97%** sell alcohol.
- **84%** of surveyed stores sell condoms, but only **72%** sell them on unlocked shelves.
- The availability of e-cigarettes in Mendocino County has grown **18%** since 2013.

- Over half of all stores in Mendocino County that sell tobacco also sell e-cigarettes (62%).

“The expanded availability of e-cigarettes is of particular concern and reflects the spike in use by teens and young adults in the last three years,” said Judy Judd, Mendocino County HHSA.

*Another goal was to examine the accessibility and marketing of healthy and unhealthy products to youth.*

“This survey found that our community’s youth are inundated with unhealthy messages and choices. We need to change what information and options our kids are exposed to and work to surround them with healthy choices and messaging instead,” said Judy Judd, Mendocino County HHSA.

**Additional survey results for Mendocino County:**

- Only **7%** of stores advertised healthy products on their storefronts, but **52%** of storefronts advertised unhealthy products. Near schools, storefront advertising for unhealthy products is even more prevalent, at **64%** of stores.
- More than **20%** of stores place tobacco products or ads in kid-friendly locations, such as tobacco ads at ‘kid-level’ (three feet or below) or tobacco products near candy or toys.
- More than **26%** of stores placed alcohol ads at “kid-level” or near kid-friendly items such as candy or toys.
- **89%** of stores sell flavored non-cigarette tobacco products, which often have kid-appealing flavors, such as grape, watermelon, chocolate, gummy candies and even breakfast cereals. Similarly, **73%** of stores near schools also sell flavored tobacco products.

“Mendocino County Health & Human Services Agency is committed to continuing to work with local health advocates and partners to provide accurate information and help make the healthy choice the easy choice for Californians.” The Tobacco Control Program provides education about tobacco, nicotine, vaping, secondhand smoke, and related topics, and plays an important role in meeting this commitment.

*Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community* is a statewide campaign formed by tobacco prevention, nutrition, alcohol abuse prevention and STD prevention partners collaborating to improve the health of Californians by informing them about the impact of unhealthy product availability and marketing in the retail environment.

**Additional survey findings include:**

1. **41%** of stores sell alcopops.
2. **87%** of stores sell tobacco chew.
3. **27%** of storefronts have advertising for sugary drinks.

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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