

For Immediate Release

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New Survey Finds Alcohol and Tobacco Products Still More Available than Milk and Fresh Fruit

Just released findings from statewide survey shows disparity in availability of healthy and unhealthy products

Alturas, CA – March 8, 2017 – Recent City of Alturas zoning changes have led to a significant decrease in illegal store front window advertising. While the State of California’s findings indicated that only 38% of stores had less than 10% of its windows of retail stores that sell tobacco, covered in signage that promotes tobacco, alcohol and unhealthy items. Modoc County can claim success on its 2014 zoning change coming in at 68%. The findings for Modoc County are part of new research 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 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 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.

“Overall, the findings show a continuing and alarming discrepancy in our county in the accessibility and marketing between products that promote a healthy lifestyle, and those that don’t,” said Bill Hall, Project Coordinator, Modoc County Tobacco Education. “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 Modoc County:

- In addition to selling cigarettes, 78% of stores sell “little cigars” or cigarillos, but only 43% of stores sold fresh fruits or vegetables. What’s more, 9% of stores sold a popular brand of “little cigars” individually for under a dollar, less than the cost of a candy bar.
- 18% of stores sold non- or low-fat milk, but nearly 100% sell alcohol.
- 100% of surveyed stores sell condoms, and 100% sell them on unlocked shelves.
- E-cigarettes saw a significant increase in Modoc in stores from the last time this survey was conducted, up more than 75%.

“The expanded availability of e-cigarettes are of particular concern and reflect the spike in use by teens and young adults in the last three years,” said Bill Hall, Project Coordinator, Modoc County Tobacco Education.

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 Bill Hall, Project Coordinator, Modoc County Tobacco Education.

The survey found the following for Modoc County:

- Only 0% of stores advertised healthy products on their storefronts, but 100% of storefronts advertised unhealthy products. 100 % of stores near schools has storefront advertising for unhealthy products.
- More than 50% 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 9% of stores placed alcohol ads at “kid-level” or near kid-friendly items such as candy or toys.
- 100 % 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, 100 % of stores near schools also sell flavored tobacco products.
- Tobacco chew is sold at 100% of stores.
- Alcopops are sold at 100% of stores

“Modoc County Tobacco Education 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.”

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.

For state and county-specific data and more information on Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community, please visit www.healthystoreshealthycommunity.com.

For more information contact Bill Hall at Modoc County Health Services, Tobacco Education, 441 N. Main St., Alturas, CA 96101 530-233-6311 or visit <http://ph.co.modoc.ca.us>