

For Immediate Release

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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.

Grass Valley, CA, March 8, 2017 – Alarmingly 98% of the 83 random stores in Nevada County surveyed sold sweet, fruity malt liquor beverages also known as Alcopops. This survey also shows that availability of e-cigarettes has grown over 22% since 2013. These findings 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 Jill Blake, Nevada County Public Health Director. “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 Nevada County:

- In addition to selling cigarettes, 94% of stores sell sweet flavored “Little cigars” or cigarillos, but only 64% of stores sold fresh fruits or vegetables. What’s more, 74% of stores sold these sweet flavored “little cigars” individually for under a dollar, less than the cost of a candy bar or bottle of water.
- 54% of stores sold non- or low-fat milk, but 90% sell alcohol.

- E-cigarettes saw a significant increase in Nevada County in stores from the last time the survey was conducted, up more than 22%.

“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 Dr. Ken Cutler, Nevada County Health Officer.

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

The survey found the following for Nevada County:

- Only 9% of stores advertised healthy products on their storefronts, but 67% of storefronts advertised unhealthy products. 40% of stores near schools have storefronts advertising for unhealthy products.
- More than 42% 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 76% of stores sell sugary drinks at the check-out counter.

“Nevada County Public Health 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 our residents and visitors,” said Blake.

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 .

The Nevada County Public Health Department recognizes and places tremendous value in the strength of community based partnership initiatives that address and improve health disparities within our community. As a key stakeholder in protecting lives, preventing disease and promoting healthy lifestyles for everyone in Nevada County, it is imperative that we work together as a community to improve our ability to prevent, recognize, and diagnose preventable diseases.

Nevada County Public Health Tobacco Use Prevention Program.