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## NEWS RELEASE

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Retailer Survey Finds an Alarming Discrepancy in the Availability, Pricing and Marketing of Healthy vs. Unhealthy Products**

#### ***The Largest Survey of its Kind in California Analyzing Healthy vs. Unhealthy Products in Retail Stores***

San Bernardino - New data reveals high rates of stores in San Bernardino County with advertisement, pricing and product placement practices that suggest young people could be targets for unhealthy products. These findings are part of new data released today on the availability, pricing and marketing practices of tobacco, alcohol, condoms and healthy/unhealthy food products in stores that sell tobacco.

Health advocates up and down the state released the survey results today, with 13 press events taking place simultaneously throughout California. The large survey collected information from more than 7,100 diverse retail stores – including convenience, supermarket, liquor, discount, pharmacies and tobacco-only stores – in all 58 counties, with the goal of shedding light on what products are available and promoted in our communities. Public health representatives, community volunteers and youth participated in the survey, which was conducted from April through June 2016.

“The amount of kid-friendly flavors found in tobacco and alcohol products, the location of unhealthy products within the store, and the amount and location of advertising left no doubt in my mind that young people are being targeted”, stated Addison Saenz, Program Manager at Public Strategies and member of the San Bernardino County Tobacco Control Coalition.

Survey results show that 77.2% of stores in San Bernardino County have advertising for unhealthy products on the outside of stores while only 21.0% have healthy advertising, such as for milk or fruit and vegetables.

The findings also show that electronic cigarettes are widely available in San Bernardino County, alarming health officials and community partners. In all, 64.7% of stores surveyed sell e-cigarettes. The number of stores selling e-cigarettes increased by 14.9% from 49.8% in 2013 to 64.7% in 2016.

The survey includes state, regional and county level data with new insights on the density of stores selling tobacco and their proximity to schools; types of tobacco and alcohol products being sold; advertising and placement of such products in stores; the availability of e-cigarettes; and the availability and promotion of unhealthy and healthy food options including low- or non-fat milk and fresh fruits and vegetables.

Additional survey findings in San Bernardino County include:

- 73.9% of stores sell alcohol in San Bernardino County.
- More than 13.9% of stores in San Bernardino County have alcohol ad that placed under three feet (at “kid-level”) or were placed near kid-friendly items such as candy or toys.
- 17.6% of stores sold non- or low-fat milk in San Bernardino County.

- A majority of stores in San Bernardino County (86.4%) sold flavored tobacco products in sweet flavors that are clearly meant to appeal to youth, such as grape, watermelon, chocolate, gummy candies and even breakfast cereals.
- 96.9% of stores sell Swisher Sweets, also known as cigarillos, for less than \$1.00.

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

The California Health Collaborative (CHC) is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization committed to enhancing the quality of life and health of the people of California, particularly the underserved and underrepresented. Guided by its mission of "changing lives by improving health and wellness", CHC implements an array of health promotion and disease prevention programs, public health surveillance systems, and a variety of capacity-building and networking initiatives.

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