



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 In Tulare County

Visalia, CA – March 8, 2017 –New research shows that in Tulare County, 64% of stores sell e-cigarettes. In contrast, only 24% of stores sell non- or low-fat milk. 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 Kate Bourne, Project Director of the Tulare County Tobacco Awareness and Education Project. “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 Tulare County:

- In addition to selling cigarettes,77% of stores sell “little cigars” or cigarillos, but only 30% of stores sold fresh fruits or vegetables. What’s more, 89% of stores sold a popular brand of “little cigars” individually for under a dollar, less than the cost of a candy bar.
- Nearly 78% sell alcohol products.
- 89% of surveyed stores sell condoms, but only 49% sell them on unlocked shelves.
- E-cigarettes availability saw a significant increase in Tulare County from the last time this survey was conducted, up more than 20%.

“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 Ms. Bourne.

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 Ms. Bourne

The survey found the following for Tulare County:

- Only 7% of stores advertised healthy products on their storefronts, but 76% of storefronts advertised unhealthy products. 73% of stores near schools have storefront advertising for unhealthy products.
- More than 27% 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 52% of stores placed alcohol ads at “kid-level” or near kid-friendly items such as candy or toys.
- 73% 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, 64% of stores near schools also sell flavored tobacco products.

“The Tulare County Tobacco Awareness and Education Project 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.

Additional survey findings include:

1. 83% of the stores in low-income areas had unhealthy advertisements on their storefronts, while 70% of the stores in non-low-income areas had unhealthy advertisements on their storefronts.
2. Out of the stores surveyed near schools, 85% sold a popular cigarillo brand for less than a dollar.

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

About Tulare County Tobacco Awareness and Education Project

The Tulare County Tobacco Awareness & Education Project (TCTAEP) is a group of diverse and dedicated individuals whose mission is to protect and preserve the Tulare County residents from the harmful effects of tobacco, tobacco smoke, e-cigarettes and other tobacco products. TCTAEP is part of the Tulare County Department of Public Health. Any persons interested in further information or how to join the TCTAEP Coalition may email Eulalia Moreno at emoreno@tularehhsa.org

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