

The County of Yuba



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**For Immediate Release
March 8, 2017**

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In Yuba County, tobacco products still more available than milk and fresh fruit

MARYSVILLE, CA – Only half of Yuba County stores sell fresh fruits and vegetables, but 19 out of 20 local stores market fruit-flavored tobacco products that appeal to our youth.

A recently completed survey shows that youth-appealing, fruit-flavored tobacco products continue to be widely available, while fresh fruit continues to be less available. This finding is 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.

“The 2016 Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community Survey showed a continuing and alarming discrepancy in Yuba County between products that promote either a healthy or unhealthy lifestyle,” said Dr. Nicole Quick, Health Officer for Yuba County. “We need a better balance of healthy products for our communities to help make the healthy choice the easy choice. 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 Yuba County:

- In addition to selling cigarettes, 95.3% of stores sell “little cigars” or cigarillos, but only 51.2% of stores sold fresh fruits or vegetables. What’s more, 81.3% of stores sold a popular brand of “little cigars” individually for under a dollar, less than the cost of a candy bar.
- 23.3% of stores sold non- or low-fat milk, but nearly 86% sell alcohol.
- 86% of surveyed stores sell condoms, but only 58% sell them on unlocked shelves.
- E-cigarettes saw a significant increase in Yuba County in stores from the last time this survey was conducted, up more than 23.3%.

“Tobacco use is the #1 cause of preventable death and disease in California,” said Amy Molina-Jones, Yuba County Office of Education Coordinator of Prevention Services. “The increase of e-cigarettes is very worrying, as it reflects the spike in use among kids and young adults and more aggressive marketing by tobacco companies.”

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

“Kids are three times more likely to be influenced by a tobacco advertisement than an adult,” said Clemente Polines, Yuba County Health Program Coordinator. “In fact, research shows that tobacco ads may be more influential on kids than peer pressure or even smokers in the family.”

The survey found the following for Yuba County:

- Only 9.3% of stores advertised healthy products on their storefronts, but 74.4% of storefronts advertised unhealthy products. 63.6% of stores near schools have storefront advertising for unhealthy products.
- More than 39.5% 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 24.3% of stores placed alcohol ads at ‘kid-level’ or near kid-friendly items such as candy or toys.
- 100% of stores near schools also sell flavored tobacco products such as grape, watermelon, chocolate, gummy candies and even breakfast cereals.

The Yuba County survey is part of statewide initiative by health advocates. Today, there are 13 separate press events being held to release results of the scientific survey, which is the largest of its kind. It builds upon an initial research released 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.

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. Alcopops are sold at 91.9% of stores.
2. Tobacco chew is sold at 88.4% of stores.
3. Menthol cigarettes are sold at 97.7% of stores.
4. Sugary drinks are sold at check-out at 16.7% of stores.
5. Storefront ads for sugary drinks were found at 58.1% of stores.

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

The Yuba County Tobacco Education Program is committed to continuing to work with local health advocates and partners to provide accurate information to improve the health and well-being of our community. **The Yuba County Tobacco Education Program is located in Marysville at 5730 Packard Avenue, Suite #100. For more information please contact Clemente Polines, Health Program Coordinator, at (530) 749-6730.**

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