

News

Healthy Stores survey shows unhealthy trends

By El Dorado County Health And Human Services Agency
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Fifty-eight counties in California took part in a statewide Healthy Stores survey last year that examined the availability and marketing of tobacco, alcohol and food products in stores that sell tobacco. One hundred, twenty-one stores were in El Dorado County. The California Department of Public Health released the results of the statewide survey on March 8.

"The survey helps us learn which products are sold in local stores, where those products are placed and how those products are marketed, particularly to young people and families," said Christy White, supervisor of the El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency's Tobacco Use Prevention Program.

The goal of the Healthy Stores project is to encourage healthy product options and marketing in our community stores.

The survey was initiated as part of the Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community campaign, a statewide collaborative effort between tobacco prevention, nutrition education, alcohol prevention and communicable disease partners across the State. Trained staff conducted the survey in El Dorado County in March 2016. Surveyors went to gas stations, pharmacies, convenience and grocery stores, as well as other stores that sell tobacco products, and documented what they found.

The results of the 2016 survey showed that most El Dorado County merchants (about 80 percent) offered a good selection of fresh fruits and vegetables. However, over half of the stores surveyed in the county offered sugary drinks at checkout stands (about 15 percent higher than the statewide average) and 71 percent of the stores surveyed in El Dorado County offered electronic smoking devices for sale (compared to the statewide average of 62 percent).

According to White, an increase in e-cigarettes among young people across the state has been a concern among health professionals and parents in recent years.

"Stores in our communities play a critical role in our health," said White. "They not only impact the economic well-being of neighborhoods, but also the physical health of the people who visit them. We hope the results of the survey give us information to engage in meaningful dialog with our community members and merchants to encourage healthy stores."

Complete results of El Dorado County's store survey are available online at edgov.us/publichealth. For additional information about the Healthy Stores campaign, including statewide data, visit healthystoreshealthycommunity.com.

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