

For Immediate Release

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Survey Shows Continuing Widespread Availability of Tobacco Products in Sierra County

Loyalton, CA – March 8, 2017 – New data reveals chewing tobacco and flavored non-cigarette products still sold in all stores surveyed in Sierra County. 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.

“Stores play a critical role on our community’s health, and our goal is to help calibrate the balance toward health,” said Anne Reugebrink, Sierra County Tobacco Use Reduction Program.

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

“This survey found that youth Statewide are inundated with unhealthy messages and choices and this includes youth in our community. 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 Anne Reugebrink, Sierra County Tobacco Use Reduction Program.

The survey found the following for Sierra County:

- Unhealthy storefront ads are down significantly from 67% to 0% in stores surveyed. Statewide, unhealthy ads decreased only slightly from 71% to 70%.
- In addition to selling cigarettes, 100% of stores sell “little cigars” or cigarillos, as well as chewing tobacco. Statewide, chewing tobacco is available at a rate of 57% and “little cigars” or cigarillos at 78%.
- 67% of stores sold non- or low-fat milk, but 100% sell alcohol.
- Only 67% of surveyed stores sell condoms compared to 81% Statewide.
- 100% of stores sell non-cigarette tobacco products, which often have kid-appealing flavors, such as grape, watermelon, chocolate, gummy candies and even breakfast cereals. Statewide, the rate for non-cigarette tobacco products is 82%.

“Sierra County Health and Social Services 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 for Sierra County include:

1. Alcopops are sold at 100% of stores.
2. No stores near schools have tobacco marketing in kid-friendly locations.
3. Youth smoking rates have increased from 10% to 23% and this includes e-cigarettes.
4. Sugary drinks are not located at checkout areas in stores.
5. Fruit and vegetables were available at all stores.

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

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