



Tuolumne County Public Health Department

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Survey Shows Continuing Widespread Availability of Tobacco Products in Tuolumne County

Sonora, CA – March 8, 2017 – New data released today on the availability and marketing of tobacco indicate that alcohol and tobacco products designed to appeal to youth are readily available in Tuolumne County. Since 2013, the number of stores that sell electronic smoking devices has increased from 40% to 72%. Tuolumne County also continues to have a higher than state average rate of the number of stores that sell chew tobacco and alcohol. The findings are part of a comprehensive collection of data that was gathered from over 40 stores in Tuolumne County. The survey 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. 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.

Local survey results indicate that industry strategies continue to make inroads into the youth market by specifically targeting young people with campaigns promoting unhealthy products, like flavored cigars and e-cigarettes. These products are being marketed throughout our county, many times in stores just a few blocks from schools. By all indications, these strategies are working. According to the Centers for Disease Control, e-cigarettes are now the most commonly used tobacco product among youth, surpassing conventional cigarettes in 2014, and more than a quarter of youth in middle and high school have tried e-cigarettes. In Tuolumne County, 36% of high school juniors and 28% of freshman students have ever used an e-cigarette.

Additional Tuolumne County survey findings for local stores selling tobacco include:

- 86% of stores sell chewing tobacco
- 66% of stores sell popular brands of "little cigars" or cigarillos for under a dollar, less than the cost of a candy bar.
- 46% of stores sell fresh fruits and vegetables
- 52% of all surveyed stores sell milk (statewide rate: 33%)
- 100% of all surveyed stores sell alcohol (statewide rate: 70%)
- 86% of stores sell flavored alcoholic beverages like hard lemonade (statewide rate: 70%)
- 87% of all surveyed stores sell condoms, but only 55% sell them on unlocked shelves

A 2012 survey of Tuolumne County cigarette smoking rates indicated that we have one of the highest rates in the state at 26%. Additionally, findings from the 2016 Tuolumne Community Health Assessment indicated that the county and the foothill region have higher rates of cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and cancer than the state average. While these trends are influenced by many factors, the environment and marketing plays an important role. "Tobacco use, an unhealthy diet, physical inactivity, excess alcohol, and limited access to fresh foods and parks, all can make us sick," said Dr. Liza Ortiz, Tuolumne County Health Officer. The Tuolumne Tobacco Control program and other local health advocates are committed to working with retailers, partners and parents throughout Tuolumne County to make healthy choices easier and to identify the ways that our choices are being influenced by community norms and marketing strategies.

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

To download the 2016 Tuolumne County Community Health Assessment please visit: <https://tuolumnecountyhealth.org/>