
A PROJECT UPDATE FROM THE CONTRA COSTA COUNTY TOBACCO PREVENTION PROJECT

Spring 2014

On March 5th, Contra Costa Health Services collaborated with other local Bay Area health departments and community partners to kick off the *Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community* statewide campaign with a release of statewide, regional and county-level data on the **availability and promotion of tobacco, alcohol and food products in stores that sell tobacco** including convenience, supermarket, liquor, tobacco, small market, discount, drug and big-box stores. This is the first time all three types of products have been analyzed together in these types of stores.

Highlights from the survey:

- **Seven in 10 stores in Contra Costa have exterior advertising for *unhealthy* products** like tobacco, alcohol and sugary drinks. This compares with 1 in 10 stores with exterior advertising for *healthy* items including fruits, vegetables and non-fat/low-fat milk.
- **Over 80% of stores near schools in Contra Costa sell flavored non-cigarette tobacco products** like “watermelon” and “tropical blast” flavored cigarillos and little cigars. Many of these products sell for under a dollar, making them very attractive and affordable for youth.
- **Sugary drinks are available at the check-out area at nearly 40% of stores near schools** in Contra Costa. The largest single non-nutritious source of calories for youth is sugary drinks, including sodas and sports drinks.
- Many of the Contra Costa communities with **high numbers of stores selling tobacco near schools** are low-income. Low-income communities have high rates of smoking and chronic diseases like heart disease, cancers and stroke. The Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids estimates that 441,000 kids now under the age of 18 in CA will ultimately die prematurely from smoking.
- **Close to half of all stores in Contra Costa sell e-cigarettes.** The number of stores that are selling e-cigarettes statewide has quadrupled in the last two years, from just over 10% in 2011 to over 45% in 2013. The percentage of high school students who reported ever using e-cigarettes doubled between 2011 and 2012. Many of these products are attractive to youth because they are relatively cheap and come in flavors like cherry-limeade and mint.
- Of the stores that sell alcohol in Contra Costa, close to **85% sell Alcopops**, which are increasingly popular among young people because of their **fruity flavors and attractive containers**. These products are flavored malt beverages sold as 12 oz. cans or bottles with typically a 12% alcohol content, or “supersized” at 23.5 oz. with 8% alcohol content.

Public health officials, tobacco prevention, alcohol prevention and nutrition partners are working to reduce the influence of marketing unhealthy products to youth, which can lead to obesity, chronic diseases and even death. For more information, contact Denice Dennis at 925-313-6825 or denice.dennis@hscd.cccounty.us.

Tobacco Prevention Coalition Meetings

Monday, May 19th, 1:30 -3:30 pm

**Contra Costa County Office of Education, Briones Room,
77 Santa Barbara Road, Pleasant Hill**

Topics include: Secondhand smoke protections policies, reducing youth access to tobacco and creating a healthier retail environment

Upcoming meetings: July 21st, September 15th, November 17th

Meetings take place from 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., locations TBD

For more information, call (925) 313-6216 or email cctobaccopreventioncoalition@gmail.com

Non-members welcome to attend meetings. To become a member, click [here](#).

-OVER-

The **City of Oakley** expects to discuss outdoor secondhand smoke protections in some areas and the use of e-cigarettes among youth on Tuesday, May 13th. The staff report and proposed ordinance is expected to be available on May 8th. For more information, contact Denice Dennis at 925-313-6825 or denice.dennis@hsd.cccounty.us.

Over the past few months, the **City of El Cerrito** has been conducting community outreach to get input into proposed outdoor and multi-unit housing secondhand smoke protections for that city. The City Council is expected to hear options for comprehensive protections at a study session in May. For more information, contact Denice Dennis at 925-313-6825 or denice.dennis@hsd.cccounty.us.

On March 6th, young people from **People Who Care** and a **Tobacco Prevention Coalition** member met with **Pittsburg Mayor Sal Evola** to discuss the high rate of illegal tobacco sales to minors in **Pittsburg and Tobacco Retailer Licensing**. The young people presented information from the community walk-around they conducted in Pittsburg earlier in the year, as well as results from a survey conducted with over 200 young people in East Contra Costa. It is expected that the City Council will discuss this issue at a public meeting in the coming months. For more information about this issue, contact Jaime Jenett at Jaime.jenett@hsd.cccounty.us or (925) 313-6216.

Antioch extended a moratorium on permits and licenses for new smoke shops for another year on April 22nd. The council established a 45-day ban on new smoke shops last May and extended it in July, citing youth exposure to tobacco products and complaints about loitering and police calls for service outside existing storefronts. State law allows a moratorium for two years.

Approximately 93% of people who live in Multi-unit housing in the San Francisco Bay Area do not allow smoking inside their units according to data from the 2011-2012 California Health Interview Survey. Unfortunately, smoke drifting into neighboring units from the remaining 7% continues to impact non-smoking residents. To address this public health issue, communities across the Bay Area, including Richmond and Walnut Creek, have adopted or are considering policies that prohibit smoking inside existing multi-unit housing units. For more information, contact Jaime Jenett at Jaime.jenett@hsd.cccounty.us or (925) 313-6216.

According to an article in the journal *Population Health Metrics*, The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington estimates a **37% reduction in smoking in Contra Costa since 1996, with an average of a 2.2% decrease per year**. Policy changes in the community, such as reducing sales to minors and secondhand smoke protections have contributed greatly to reducing smoking rates in the County. There is clearly more work to be done, however, as nearly 10% of Contra Costa residents still smoke.

On 2/12/14, **Fremont** became the third city in Alameda County to adopt a moratorium on any new **e-cigarette sellers**. The council also unanimously voted to prohibit use of e-cigarettes where smoking is prohibited, including in all indoor workplaces and all outdoor public places including parks, doorways, bus stops and other lines, and dining.

On April 3, 2014, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a study that found a **dramatic increase in the number of e-cigarette related calls to poison centers**. E-cigarette related calls now account for 41.7% of combined monthly e-cigarette and cigarette exposure calls to poison centers, a large increase from the 0.3% they accounted for in September 2010. These poisonings resulted from exposure to e-cigarettes liquid by ingestion (68.9%), inhalation (16.8%) or absorption through the skin or eyes (5.9%). Calls were almost 20% more likely to report adverse health effects such as vomiting, nausea and eye irritation than calls regarding exposure to traditional cigarettes. The study also found that more than half of these poisonings involved children 5 years and under while over 40% involved persons over the age of 20.

Friend the Tobacco Prevention Coalition on Facebook:
[“Tobacco Prevention Coalition of Contra Costa”](http://www.cchealth.org/topics/tobacco/) Visit us online at:
<http://www.cchealth.org/topics/tobacco/>