Reducing Youth Access to and Use of Tobacco in Lakewood, Colorado

Youth Tobacco Use

- Almost 90% of all regular smokers begin smoking at or before age 18. ¹
- The 2015 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey indicated that among high school students in Colorado:  
  26% use e-cigarettes, 8.9% smoke cigars, 8.6% smoke cigarettes, and 4.9% use chew. ²
- E-cigarettes are now the most commonly used tobacco product among youth. ³
- Current e-cigarette use among middle and high school students tripled from 2013-2014. ⁴

Youth Access to Tobacco in the Retail Setting

- Two out of three Colorado youth, under the age of 18, who attempted to buy cigarettes were successful. ²
- Almost 60% of Colorado high school students under the age of 18 reported that it is easy or very easy to get cigarettes. ²
- A study conducted by UC Denver in Colorado reported a sales to minor violation rate of 25.3%. ⁵
- Teenage store clerks are a major source of tobacco for high school age smokers. ⁶

How the Tobacco Industry Uses the Retail Environment

- Pervasive retail tobacco promotional practices, including product and advertising placement and pricing tactics, known to influence youth towards smoking, contribute to increased initiation, experimentation and regular smoking. ⁷
- Big Tobacco now spends more than 95 percent of its $9 billion marketing budget to advertise and promote their products in convenience stores, gas stations and other retail outlets. ⁸
  
  o Note: Two-thirds of middle school students visit a convenience store, small grocery, or liquor store at least once a week, and weekly or more frequent exposure to retail tobacco marketing has been associated with a 50% increase in the odds of ever smoking. ⁹
- Cigarettes are advertised most heavily in stores where adolescents shop. ⁹
- The tobacco industry continues to market and sell products that are appealing to youth in sweet flavors at cheap prices.

Gaps in the FDA and State Laws

- Existing federal and state law, including the final deeming regulations from the FDA, do not require:  
  o tobacco retailers to have a license to sell tobacco.
  o suspension or revocation of ability to sell tobacco by retailers that repeatedly break tobacco-related laws
  o prohibition of self-service displays of cigars and e-cigarettes.
  o prohibition of flavors for smokeless tobacco, cigars and e-cigarettes.

More Information

www.TobaccoFreeJeffco.com/Youth | email: tobaccofree@jeffco.us | phone: 303-275-7558
Best Practices and Proposed Solutions

- Requiring a license to sell tobacco is essential to youth tobacco prevention:
  - Licensing is a proven approach to increasing and enforcing restrictions on illegal sales and other known youth-targeted promotional, product placement and pricing tactics.\(^\text{10}\)
  - Licensing is a common-sense approach to ensure that retailers operate legally, ethically and responsibly when it comes to preventing illegal tobacco sales to kids.\(^\text{11}\)
  - Local tobacco retail licensing programs that include retailer fees high enough to pay for enforcement have been shown to be the most effective policy at reducing illegal sales by merchants.\(^\text{12}\)
  - Licensing empowers communities to better respond at a local level to the changing landscape of tobacco issues.
  - Licensing creates a level playing field for all members of the business community by ensuring they are following the law and being held to the same standards.

- Minimum recommended provisions in a tobacco retail license include:
  - Language that states that a violation of any federal, state or local tobacco law is a violation of the retail license
  - Increase clerk age to sell tobacco to 18
  - Prohibit self-service of all tobacco/nicotine products and paraphernalia
  - No admittance under 18 in tobacco business
  - Limit location and number of tobacco retailers (near schools, for example)

- Cutting edge tobacco retail policy options:
  - Raise minimum age to purchase tobacco to 21
  - Set minimum package size
  - Prohibit price discounting of tobacco products
  - Prohibit the sale of flavored tobacco products
  - Include other paraphernalia, such as pipes and rolling papers, to be covered by law
  - And more…. contact Jefferson County Public Health for additional provisions.

Communities with Tobacco Retail Licensing Laws

- 884 communities nationwide have adopted local tobacco retail licensing policies.\(^\text{13}\)

Residents Support It

Among Lakewood* Residents...

- 95% believe youth tobacco use in Jeffco is a health concern.
- 75% believe that tobacco companies market their products to youth.
- 71% believe that where tobacco is displayed/sold inside a retail store can encourage youth tobacco use.
- 74% believe that tobacco advertising in retail stores can encourage youth tobacco use.
- 95% believe that cheaper / lower priced tobacco products can encourage youth tobacco use.

Lakewood residents mistakenly think…

- 94% think that retailers are already required to have a license to sell tobacco, when in fact this is not the case.
- 61% think that it is illegal for youth under 18 to sell tobacco products when working in a retail store, when in fact this is not the case.

Lakewood residents support…

- 77% support requiring retailers to have a license to sell tobacco products.
- 92% support requiring that a retail clerk who is selling tobacco be 18 years of age or older.
- 60% think that retailers / store owners should help youth avoid tobacco use.

*Results based on 2010 and 2011 National Research Center Household Survey conducted in Lakewood, Colorado.
References:


11. STORE: Strategic Tobacco Retail Effort. Talking Points: Retailer Licensing.


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