

Maine Tobacco Prevention Success Story: Assessing Tobacco Retailers

Summary

As part of its outreach efforts to tobacco retailers, Healthy Acadia administered surveys to 6 store managers or owners to assess their level of engagement and provide information on available tobacco prevention resources.

Need/ Issue (or “Challenge”)

Tobacco retailers must adhere to strict laws governing the sale of tobacco products. With the passage of Tobacco 21 and new flavor restrictions, it is important that retailers are aware of available resources like the Maine Prevention Store to help them comply with regulations. Based on the 2019 Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey, almost three in ten high school students report using e-cigarettes. Thus, restricting youth access must remain a priority for stores that sell tobacco products.



Intervention/ Program Description

Healthy Acadia began the process of retailer engagement to administer assessments by reaching out to stores with whom staff members had a pre-existing relationship based on their substance use prevention partnerships. When asking whether retailers would be willing to answer the questions, staff explained that the process would not take long and the questions were simply designed to support them. Staff administered surveys in August and September in person at six stores in Hancock County and used face coverings for protection due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results/ Success

Retailers were happy to answer the survey questions posed by Healthy Acadia staff and several of them were receptive to receiving follow up information in the postal mail. One retailer was eager to establish another meeting to learn as much as possible from Healthy Acadia about the responsible sale of tobacco products. Once staff successfully administered a few surveys, it was helpful to be able to tell new retailers that other stores had participated, building momentum and generating interest based on participation by their peers.

Sustainability

Healthy Acadia staff has already scheduled more meetings with retailers during Year 5 to build on the team's success during the fall. The assessments serve to guide staff in determining next steps in providing support and education to retailers. Retailer education and enforcement of sales laws are part of the CDC's recommendations for preventing youth tobacco use.¹

Reference

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Best Practices for Comprehensive Tobacco Control Programs – 2014*. Section A: State and Community Interventions. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/best_practices/pdfs/2014/sectionA-1.pdf. Accessed October 14, 2020.

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