

# RETAIL ASSESSMENTS IN "THE COUNTY" PROPEL POLICY SUCCESS

Four northern Aroostook County retailers improve their smoke-free workplace policies when prevention partners reach out to complete on-site retail assessments.

## Obstacle

Working in our large, rural county we understand there are many difficulties facing retailers when trying to improve youth tobacco use prevention, while maintaining tobacco sales for adults. Data from the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey (MIYHS) show that 26.5% of Aroostook County middle school and 53.9% of high school students think they could easily get cigarettes if they wanted some. Local retailers, like so many other county businesses, are short-staffed and are working extra-long hours. Despite the long hours, they still lack the time necessary to accomplish the list of tasks that have proven to be most successful in the reduction of youth tobacco product use.

## Summary

In the month of July, ACAP's District Tobacco Prevention Partners (DTTPs) took to the road visiting northern Aroostook County retailers to assess the use and need of smoke-free resources and training. They also wanted to address any resource-related questions retailers might have. On the drive, they visited 8 retailers from Caribou to Madawaska. While completing the assessment, the DTTPs heard management staff indicate interest in more resources and more up-to-date training for employees. These conversations led to questions about their smoke-free policy, and how DTTPs could help them improve or implement one for their workplace.



How could I pass up the opportunity  
-Gary Babin Owner, Babin's Grocery



I'm really glad you visited. I had never heard of the Maine prevention store. This was helpful. -Jeremy Flannery  
Owner, Dodo's market

# Our Process

## Retail Assessment

**TOBACCO PRODUCTS  
CANNOT  
BE SOLD  
TO ANYONE  
UNDER 21**



1

When beginning retail assessments we explain the reason for our visit, how we are here to help, and all that we have to offer. We make sure that the retailer has appropriate training access for their employees, and that they have all of the resources provided by Maine CDC and know how to find them if necessary. Because we know they are busy, we offer to place the order for them this time.

## Policy Implementation



2

After the assessment segment of the visit, we ask if the location currently has a smoke-free policy in place. If they do, we ask if we can review it. The case for all of the locations on this visit was that they either did not have a policy, or it was no longer current and was lacking language that would protect them from the dangers of electronic cigarettes as well as other commercial tobacco products. At this point, we offered the prefilled best-level template that the manager could review on the spot or hang on to, to share with the owner of the store.

## Resource Email Follow-up

From : ACAP/Tobacco Prevention <cholland@acap-me.org>  
Reply : cholland@acap-me.org  
Subject : Tobacco Prevention Follow-Up!



**Resources for  
Retailers**

**NO BUTS!** BLOCKING UNLAWFUL TOBACCO SALES  
for kids here  
Maine Tobacco Retailer Training

3

We created an email campaign to send out to the locations who completed the assessment. The email consisted of a short note to express our gratitude for making our communities a healthier place to live. We included links to the Maine Prevention Store for resources and No Buts! for the virtual training. Our goal was to ensure ease of access to the most important resources.

## Conclusion

We have determined that rather than sending an email or making a phone call, meeting our retailers in person is our most successful approach, especially in the terms of policy success. We enjoy connecting with all retailers and business owners in the county because we have the ability to educate them on current policies and to make sure they know how to get the free resources that are available to them.



Maine Center for Disease Control & Prevention  
Department of Health and Human Services



Contact us at [prevention@acap-me.org](mailto:prevention@acap-me.org) Attn: Tobacco