

Who Pays, and at what Price? Big Tobacco's Influence on Youth.

Tobacco Prevention: Counterbalancing marketing strategies of big tobacco companies.

According to the Maine Integrated Youth Health Survey of 2021, 10.8% of Maine middle schoolers report using an electronic vapor device, while 31.1% report seeing 'a lot' of tobacco advertisements at various retailers who sell tobacco products. Tobacco companies pay billions of dollars to advertise and promote tobacco products, including e-cigarettes. These products target youth using colorful packaging, fruity flavors, and calculated product placement while minimizing smoking-related health risks. Prevention efforts balance those of tobacco companies by educating tobacco retailers on point-of-sale best practices and tobacco policies.



"We've had some issues with underage sales. I haven't heard of the No Butts! online class. It could be useful, may I have your email?"

*-7 Day Mart, Manager
Convenience Store, Farmington, ME*



"We don't have a written policy on tobacco products. We will place signage with your guidance." "Thank you for your help!"

*-Blue Sky Medical Dispensary, Owner
Cannabis Store, Farmington, ME*

The Healthy Community Coalition of Greater Franklin County (HCC), which partners with the Maine CDC and the Center for Tobacco Independence, supports retailers and helps reduce underage tobacco sales. This past summer, the HCC staff focused on tobacco retailers by conducting 14 tobacco assessments in Franklin County. Assessments were initiated via email and completed by phone or in-store. Retailers answered questions relating to signage, who sent them signage, tobacco sales, and workplace policies.

Managers and store owners carry heavy business responsibilities; tobacco prevention is not always on their radar. Most tobacco retailers were initially hesitant to view tobacco from a prevention lens rather than a promotion lens. It was essential to understand the retailer's tone of voice and whether they sounded interested or not. The HCC explained how tobacco companies specifically market to minors. Moreover, how it impacts the community. The HCC provided assistance and guidance in point of sale (POS) procedures critical to underage sales prevention.



"I was able to finally find tobacco license! It's been buried in paperwork, you gave us the 'push' we needed to locate it. Thanks for reaching out!"

*-Strokes Bar and Grille, Manager
Sugarloaf Golf Course, Carrabassett Valley, ME*



"Our employees are mandated to take No Butts!, and our customers have to be 21 to come in."

*-Maine Smoke Shop #107, Owner
New England Discount Retailers, LLC.,
Multiple Locations in ME and NH*

Retailer tobacco assessments are beneficial on multiple levels. One of the said benefits includes community awareness of tobacco prevention efforts. Many retailers have experienced a high staff turnover since the pandemic, so the assessment served as a great tool to remind Franklin County retailers of the tobacco disparities in the towns they live in and laws to prevent young hands on tobacco products.

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