

Maine Tobacco Prevention Success Story

Supporting Tobacco Retailers to Reduce Youth Access to Tobacco

Since January 2020, District Tobacco Prevention Partners completed 495 assessments at licensed tobacco retailers statewide to support smoke-free and tobacco-free workplace policies and block underage tobacco sales!

Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable disease, disability, and death in the United States. Smoking kills more people than alcohol, AIDS, car crashes, illegal drugs, murders, and suicides combined, and thousands more die from other tobacco-related causes such as fires caused by smoking and smokeless tobacco use. In Maine, 15.6% (174,700) adults smoke, 5.5% (2,976) high school students smoke and 30.2% use e-cigarettes. 400 kids (under 18) become daily smokers each year.



Licensed tobacco retailers are uniquely positioned to act responsibly to reduce and eliminate underage access to tobacco products. As an important part of our communities, retailers can reduce youth use of tobacco products by being diligent about checking IDs and refusing to sell tobacco to minors. Responsible tobacco retailing is not just a public health strategy, it is Maine law.

Maine Health Center for Tobacco Independence (CTI) Tobacco Prevention Services initiative is built on a strong partnership with fifteen District Tobacco Prevention Partners (DTPP). Statewide, the DTPPs completed assessments at licensed tobacco retailers in their communities to identify and provide education on Maine's retail tobacco sales laws and rules, adopted comprehensive smoke-free and tobacco-free policies to protect workers from secondhand smoke and create a more efficient work environment, promoted Maine's retailer education program - NO BUTS!. (Blocking Underage Tobacco Sales) to prevent underage tobacco sales, and provided educational materials to support these policies and education training.

2021 Maine Integrated Youth Health survey reported that 5.5% of High School Students did smoke cigarettes at least 1 day during the past 30 days, a decrease from 7.1% in 2019.

In Maine over 1,900 tobacco retailers are licensed annually. In 2019, 4,521 NO BUTS! retailer trainings were completed. However, COVID-19 reshaped not only daily lives, but also tobacco prevention including, retailer trainings, assessments and enforcement. Despite the pandemic, DTPPs shifted their outreach with tobacco retailers to email, phone, and virtual meetings, finding ways to connect retailers to trainings and supportive resources. Although numbers did not return to pre-pandemic levels, in 2020 and 2021, 5,880 NO BUTS! retailer trainings were conducted to support retailers in their role of deterring underage tobacco sales!



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