DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 5, 2014
NR # 14-10

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NEW DATA AVAILABLE ON TOBACCO MARKETING TO KIDS FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

The First and Largest Survey of its Kind in California Analyzing Tobacco, Alcohol, and Food in Stores

New data reveals that the County of San Bernardino has a significantly higher percentage rate than the State average of stores that sell candy, mint, and liquor flavored non-cigarette tobacco products and are near schools. This finding is part of new data released today on the availability and marketing of tobacco, alcohol, and unhealthy and healthy food products in stores that sell tobacco – the first time all three categories of products have been analyzed together.

Health advocates up and down the State released the survey results today, with 13 press events taking place simultaneously throughout California. The large survey collected information from more than 7,300 diverse retail stores – including convenience, supermarket, liquor, tobacco, small market, discount, drug, and big-box stores – in all 58 counties, with the goal of shedding light on which products are available and promoted in our communities. Nearly 700 public health representatives, community volunteers and youth participated in the survey, which was conducted from July through October 2013.

"We have made a lot of strides in recent years but, as these survey results show, the tobacco industry and other companies offering unhealthy products are continuing to find new ways and new products to entice our youth, like flavored cigars which are the same price as a pack of gum. These are being marketed throughout our county, many times in stores just a few blocks from schools," said Dr. Maxwell Ohikhuare, County Health Officer. "We are committed to working with retailers, partners, and parents throughout the County of San Bernardino to protect our kids and make our communities healthier. We all must be educated about how the places we shop are influencing unhealthy behaviors."

Survey results show that over 76% of stores have advertising for unhealthy products on the outside of stores while only 12% have healthy advertising, such as milk, fruits and vegetables. In a previous survey, 16.1% of stores in the County of San Bernardino were located within 1,000 feet of schools which are frequented by our kids.

"Most adults seem to be desensitized to the unhealthy advertising and products in stores", said Kori Lemoine, a youth participant in the data collection this past summer. "But we need to all stop

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and notice how many unhealthy messages are surrounding us kids every day. We can be highly influenced by marketing of products like tobacco and alcohol, even more so than peer pressure. Our choices now could lead to either a healthy lifestyle or to obesity, chronic disease and even death."

The findings also show that electronic cigarettes, also called e-cigarettes, are widely available in the County, alarming Health Officials and community partners. Almost half of all stores sell e-cigarettes. Statewide, the number of stores selling e-cigarettes quadrupled in the last two years, from 11.5% in 2011 to 45.7% in 2013. "This is yet another highly addictive product that is being aggressively marketed and is showing up in retail stores," said Dr. Ohikhuare. "The popularity and prevalence could undermine the great work we've done on tobacco use in California."

The survey includes state, regional, and county level data with new insights on the density of stores selling tobacco and their proximity to schools; types of tobacco and alcohol products being sold; advertising and placement of such products in stores; the availability of e-cigarettes; and the availability and promotion of unhealthy and healthy food options including low- or non-fat milk, fresh fruits and vegetables.

Additional survey findings in the County of San Bernardino include:

- 87% of stores are selling flavored non-cigarette tobacco products and are located near schools, a much higher percentage than the State average.
- 44.6% of stores sell tobacco products near the candy at the check-out counter
- 68.5% of the stores had sugary drinks placed at the check-out counter
- Only 3 out of 10 stores sell a good selection of good quality fresh fruits and vegetables.
- Nearly 90% of the stores that sold alcohol, sold alcopops. An alcopop is a malt-based fruity flavored alcoholic beverage, usually appealing to underage drinkers.

Today's data release also marks the launch of *Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community*, a statewide campaign – formed tobacco prevention, nutrition, and alcohol prevention partners working in collaboration – to improve the health of Californians by informing them about the impacts of unhealthy product marketing in the retail environment.

For state, regional, and county specific data and more information on *Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community*, visit www.HealthyStoresHealthyCommunity.com.

The Tobacco Use Reduction Now (TURN) program of the San Bernardino County Department of Public Health is committed to creating a tobacco-free county through community education, health promotion and prevention efforts. For more information on the program's tobacco prevention services and involvement in the Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community campaign, please call TURN at 1-800-637-6653.

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