



# COUNTY OF YOLO

Office of the County Administrator

*Patrick S. Blacklock*  
County Administrator

Beth Gabor  
Manager of Public Affairs

625 Court Street, Room 204 • Woodland, CA 95695  
(530) 666-8042 • FAX (530) 666-8193  
[www.yolocounty.org](http://www.yolocounty.org)

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Contact: Beth Gabor, Manager of Public Affairs  
(530) 666-8042 [w] • (530) 219-8464 [c]

## **Survey Finds Tobacco Products Easily Available to Children in Yolo County Stores**

(Woodland, CA) – New data released today reveals that Yolo County has more stores selling flavored tobacco products than other areas in the state, and more of these stores are near schools. These findings are part of a statewide survey on the availability and marketing of tobacco, alcohol and both unhealthy and healthy food products in stores that sell tobacco – the first time all three categories have been analyzed together. Between July and October 2013, more than 700 public health representatives, community volunteers and youth collected data for the survey from over 7,300 diverse retail stores including convenience, supermarket, liquor, tobacco, small market, discount, drug and big-box stores.

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.

“The survey results show those offering unhealthy products are continuing to find new ways to entice our youth, such as flavored cigars which are the same price as a pack of gum, and these products are being marketed throughout our county, often in stores just a few blocks from schools,” said Yolo County Health Officer Constance Caldwell, M.D. “We are committed to working with retailers, partners and parents throughout Yolo County to protect our children and make our communities healthier.”

Survey results also show that more than 69% of stores that sell alcohol have alcohol advertisements near candy and toys and/or related displays below three feet high. This kind of advertising placement makes children susceptible to the flashy colors and bold statements which should be reserved for adults.

“As adults we’re desensitized to the unhealthy advertising and products in stores,” said Dr. Caldwell. “We need to stop and notice how many unhealthy messages are surrounding our children every day. Research shows that young people are highly influenced by the marketing of products like tobacco and alcohol, even more so than peer pressure. Their choices today could either lead to a healthy lifestyle or to obesity, chronic disease and even death.”

The findings of the survey show that electronic cigarettes are widely available in Yolo County, alarming health officials and community partners. More than 45% of stores in Yolo County 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 showing up in retail stores,” said Dr. Caldwell. “The popularity and prevalence could undermine the great work we’ve done to reduce tobacco use in California.”

Additional survey findings specific to Yolo County include:

- 74% of stores sell chewing tobacco as compared to 56% statewide
- 54.5% of stores have tobacco products near candy at the checkout
- 77.1% of stores sell sugary drinks at the checkout
- 59.1% of stores that sell alcohol have exterior alcohol advertising

Today's data release also marks the launch of Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community, a statewide campaign formed by 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](http://www.HealthyStoresHealthyCommunity.com).

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