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## Abstract

Lead initiatives for chronic disease staff in San Mateo County include addressing policies and practices that perpetuate health inequities and preventing youth initiation of tobacco use. In the summer of 2013, ethnically diverse youth and young adults completed a full census data collection (599 stores) of retail establishments licensed to sell tobacco. Volunteers collected information on the availability, access, marketing, and pricing of tobacco products, healthy and unhealthy foods, and alcohol. Tobacco funding requirements required a survey, however local program desire for a health equities report focusing on the current retail environment provided for a data driven policy driven report.

## Background

San Mateo County:

- western boundary of the San Francisco Bay
- ranked as the 4<sup>th</sup> healthiest county in the state
- median income above \$81,000

High marks on general population health and low overall smoking rates often mask the need for targeted efforts in specific populations.

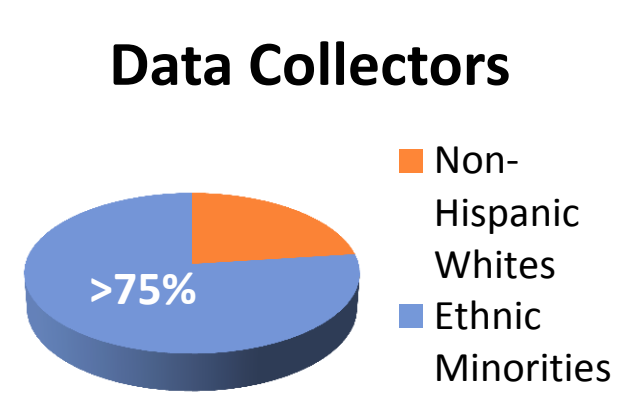
In this project special emphasis was placed on

- recruiting minority youth and young adults to survey stores in their neighborhoods
- engage youth and young adults in future efforts to reduce tobacco use and exposure in their (ethnic) communities.

## Data & Data Collectors

Most data was gathered through observation with 3-5 questions asked of the retailers about pricing.

Data collectors used handheld smart devices to collect in-person data at retailers using the iSURVEY application.



Most were Under age 30

## Methods

The methodology included developing a rubric and scoring system for assigning each tobacco retailer a score in each of the following 3 categories: Tobacco, Alcohol, and Nutrition.

The rubric included survey questions that are indicators of a healthy retail environment.

The healthy store rubric was a point scoring system whose sole source of data is the retail survey.

Tobacco and alcohol placement, advertising, and promotions were weighted more heavily.

**Category Score:** In each category, the scoring system awards points for responses that correspond to greater health; the healthier a store's responses, the higher its score will be.

|                  | ★   | ★★  | ★★★  | ★★★★  | ★★★★★ |
|------------------|-----|-----|------|-------|-------|
| <b>Tobacco</b>   | 0-1 | 2-4 | 5-9  | 10-14 | 15-18 |
| <b>Alcohol</b>   | 0-1 | 2-3 | 4-6  | 7-9   | 10-12 |
| <b>Nutrition</b> | 0-1 | 2-4 | 5-11 | 12-17 | 18-22 |

Least healthy ← → healthiest

Store scores for each category (Tobacco, Alcohol and Nutrition) is the number of points earned in the survey and then a store received a grade between one and five for each category based on point value ranges. Data results were summarized visually using a web-based platform to show the distribution of scores in city boundaries and categories.

The California Department of Public Health provided a broad analysis on tobacco density, prevalence of health products, prevalence on youth centric flavors, location and pricing. Additionally, secondary analysis compared the store's products and marketing practices with other tobacco retailers at zip code, city, and county region levels.

## Results

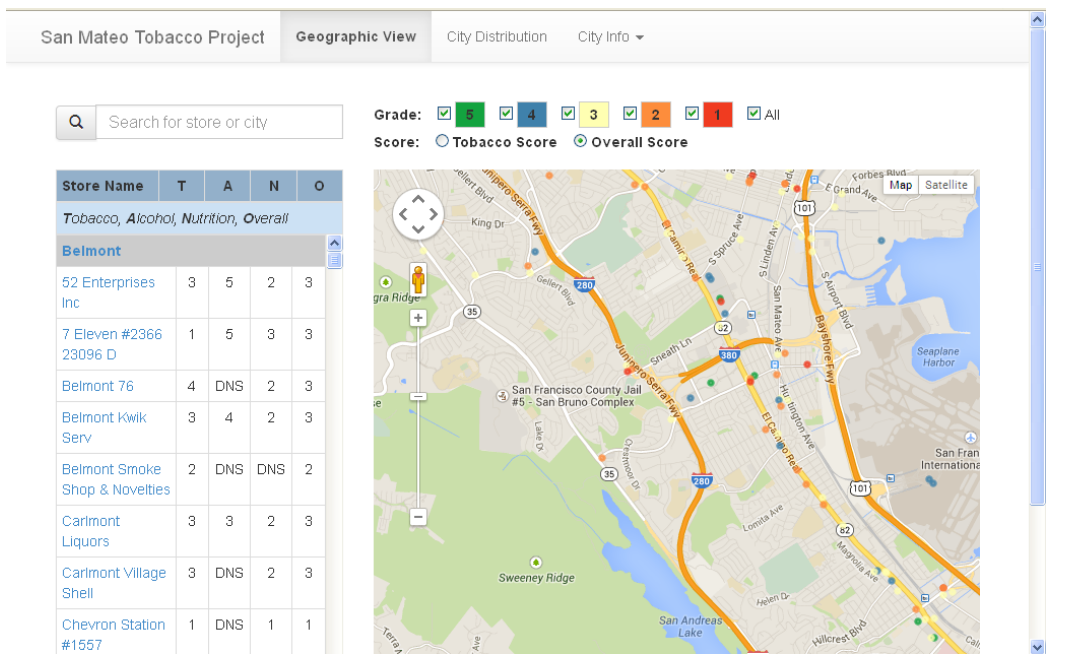
**WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT STORES THAT SELL TOBACCO (2013)**

| Category   | Count | %     |
|--|-------|-------|
| Stores that sell tobacco products                            | 542   | 90.3% |
| # of stores that sell tobacco                                | 542   | 90.3% |
| # of stores that sell tobacco (City of Redwood primary base) | 144   | 26.4% |
| # of stores that sell tobacco (City of Redwood primary base) | 144   | 26.4% |
| Number of youth-friendly stores                              | 144   | 26.4% |
| Number of adult-friendly stores                              | 76    | 14%   |

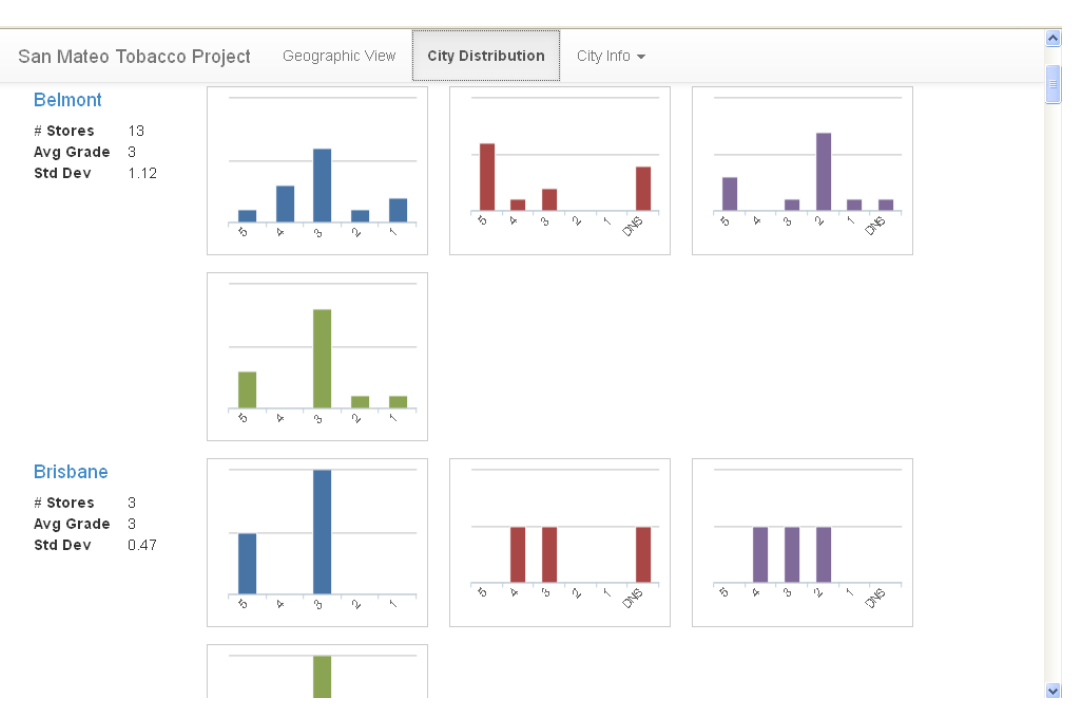
**KEY FINDINGS:**

- 80% of retailers sell youth-friendly flavored tobacco products
- 75% sell alcopops and most stores in low income areas sell a greater variety of flavored tobacco products than fresh produce.
- More than half of the stores surveyed, and near schools, place tobacco products near candy and sugary drinks at check-out counters.
- 12.5% of the citations for sales to minors in 2011-13 were issued to pharmacies; yet pharmacies are just over 9% of tobacco retailers.

The results show **80% of retailers** sell youth-friendly flavored tobacco products, **75% sell alcopops** and most stores in low income areas sell a greater variety of flavored tobacco products than fresh produce. **More than half of the stores surveyed, and near schools, place tobacco products near candy and sugary drinks at check-out counters.** **12.5% of the citations for sales to minors in 2011-13 were issued to pharmacies;** yet pharmacies are just over 9% of tobacco retailers. To date, there were no jurisdiction-wide policies in place to reduce the targeting and facilitation of youth and vulnerable populations to engage in unhealthy behaviors in the retail environment.



http://smcretailsurvey.dorrington.org



## Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community



## The Campaign

The **Healthy Stores for a Healthy Community** campaign is a statewide collaboration between tobacco use prevention, nutrition and alcohol prevention partners. The goals include:

- improve the health of Californians through changes in community stores
- educate people on how in-store product marketing influences consumption of unhealthy products.

San Mateo County will survey again in 2016 to gauge impact of policies implemented that target the retail environment.

## Policy Implications

Comprehensive policies to impact chronic disease rates can be developed to target unhealthy retail environments including:

- Jurisdiction-wide restrictions on placement of marketing in stores to reduce youth enticement
- Jurisdiction-wide prohibition of the sale of tobacco in pharmacies (Current policy initiative)
- Zoning restrictions to reduce the number of tobacco retailers along the major retail corridor (El Camino Real)
- Develop baseline data for uniform goals, objectives, and evaluation methods with tobacco, alcohol and nutrition program staff to further assess the effectiveness of programs.