

Limiting Storefront Advertising to Reduce Exposure to Unhealthy Influences

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Summary

Thanks to the collaboration of the Fresno County Department of Public Health (FCDPH), and the Youth Leadership Institute (YLI), the City of Fresno, located in Fresno County, adopted a policy that restricts the location and type of storefront advertising allowed in the city. As a result, 494,665 residents in the City of Fresno are further protected from the promotional influences of tobacco products and sugary drinks.

Challenge

The retail environment is the tobacco industry's main point of entry into local communities, and where the bulk of its advertising and promotional budgets are spent. An observational survey of local tobacco retail stores in Fresno County conducted in 2013 found that storefronts were saturated with unhealthy storefront advertisements for tobacco and sugary drinks, especially those located in low income and minority communities. Research shows that youth are highly influenced by the marketing of products. Marketing practices, even more than peer pressure, impact youth purchase decisions. Purchase decisions and lifestyle choices that are established in youth can lay a foundation for good health in the years to come or can lead to obesity, chronic illness and even death.

Solution

With funding from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, FCDPH partnered with YLI to address the health and safety issues surrounding storefront advertising. This public health effort included widespread education and engagement about the impact of storefront advertising on health and safety. Youth were actively engaged in providing education to city leaders, retailers, and local community groups. Technical assistance was provided to the City of Fresno on policy adoption and implementation.

Your Involvement is Key

You can help the City of Fresno enforce this new policy to reduce unhealthy storefront advertising by reporting violations via the city's "FresGo" mobile app. The app is free and easy to use. Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearingin says, "You see the problem, you point, you click, you submit the item." For more information about storefront advertising and impact on the community visit www.fcdph.org/storefront.

Success Stories

<http://nccd.cdc.gov/nccdsuccessstories/>



Results

This initiative inspired policy change by the City of Fresno. In December 2015, the Fresno City Council amended the city's development code to include restrictions on the location and type of storefront advertising allowed in the city. This change reaches approximately 494,665 residents living in the City of Fresno. To inform the public about this new policy, the City of Fresno, FCDPH, and YLI conducted a joint news conference on May 18, 2016. The news conference was covered by five local media stations.

"The new development code is a great step for more community-friendly markets that invest in the health of its customers."

- Bashar Sharhan

Sustainable Success

The initiative's goal is for three other cities in Fresno County to adopt policies to reduce storefront in the next three years. FCDPH will develop a toolkit that outlines the key steps of planning and implementing an effective storefront advertising initiative. The toolkit will include supporting materials used in each step of the model and will help facilitate ongoing technical assistance to neighboring cities that are interested in adopting a storefront advertising point of sale communication policy. Toolkits will be sent to every city in the County and will be available for download at www.fcdph.org.

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