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POS Community Support Survey: Baseline Assessment

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STUDY PURPOSE

The tobacco industry has long relied on advertising to attract new customers, maintain brand loyalty, make tobacco more appealing to adolescents, and increase youth initiation.¹ Additionally, smokers attempting to quit are more likely to purchase tobacco when they see advertisements at retail locations.^{2,3} To reduce the influence of tobacco advertising and decrease the availability of tobacco products, communities can implement point of sale (POS) policies. These may restrict tobacco advertising at retail locations, require retailers to post graphic warning signs, or limit the number of tobacco retailer licenses issued in a community.

Findings from an assessment of tobacco advertising and promotion in St. Louis County⁴ indicated the need for county-wide adoption of POS policies. Community support for the restriction and elimination of tobacco product advertising and promotion is important to developing and implementing POS policies. In order to assess support for POS policies residents, the evaluation team conducted a survey of 500 St. Louis County residents. The survey was designed to assess support for three types of POS policies:

- Policies that restrict advertising (by store type and/or distance from schools, playgrounds, and daycare facilities);
- Policies that restrict the number of retailer licenses; and
- Policies that require the display of graphic warning signs.

AUDIENCE

This report presents the findings from the Point of Sale Community Support Survey. These findings are provided to St. Louis CPPW stakeholders to help inform intervention efforts for the development and implementation of POS policies.

SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

A telephone survey was administered to 500 adults in St. Louis County between November and December 2010 to assess St. Louis County resident support for POS policies. Only 9% of the sample were current smokers, which is much lower than the state rate of 25%⁵ and about half the County rate of 19%.⁶

Table 1. Characteristics of POS Community Support Survey sample*

Smoking status	
Nonsmoker	53%
Former	37%
Current	9%
Children at home	
Yes	28%
No	71%
Work at convenience store	
Yes	3%
No	97%

*Table and graphic totals may not sum to 100% due to missing data. Respondents were not required to reply to every question and may have decided to skip uncomfortable questions.

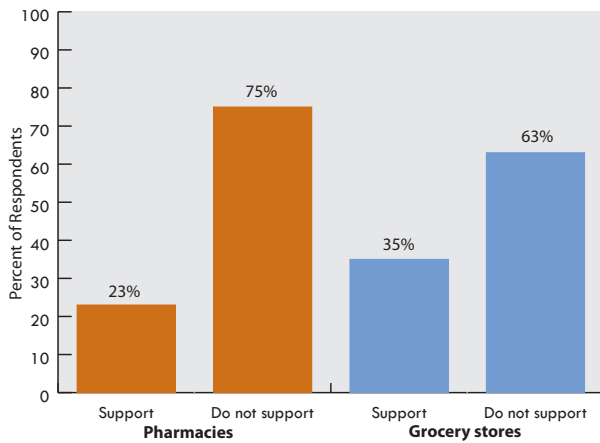
RESULTS

Advertising

Residents did not support advertising at pharmacies and grocery stores.

Figure 1 summarizes attitudes toward advertising at pharmacies and grocery stores. Regardless of smoking status, a majority of residents did not support advertising at pharmacies and grocery stores.

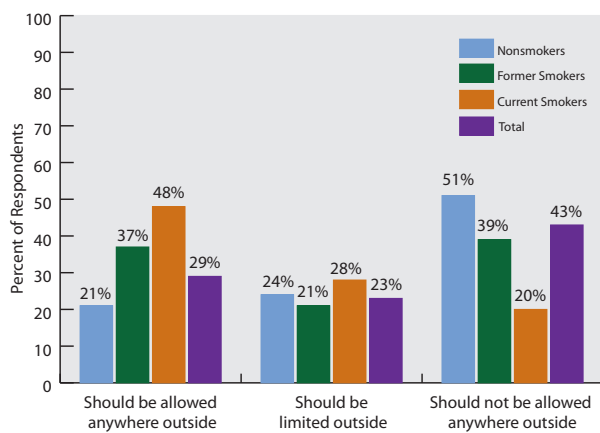
Figure 1. Support for advertising at pharmacies and grocery stores



Residents did not support unlimited outdoor advertising at gas stations and convenience stores.

Forty-three percent of residents believed that advertising should not be allowed outside of gas stations and convenience stores (Figure 2). However, smoking status influenced responses. For instance, nonsmokers were less

Figure 2. Support for outdoor advertising at gas stations and convenience stores



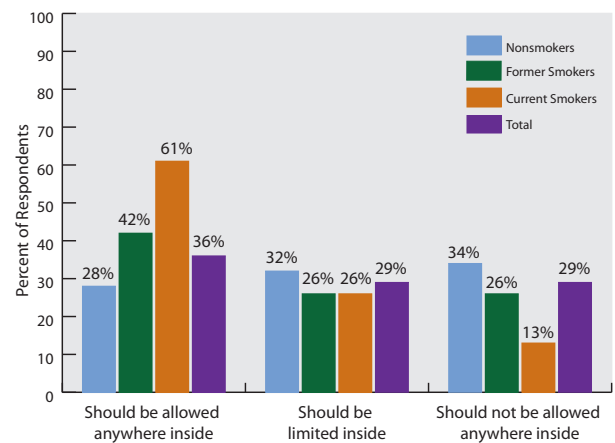
likely to support outdoor advertising at gas stations and convenience stores than former and current smokers. Additionally, residents were asked about their support for outdoor advertising at convenience stores and gas stations near schools, parks, or daycare facilities. A large proportion of St. Louis County residents (78%) were not supportive of outdoor advertising *within 1,000 feet of schools, playgrounds,*

or daycare facilities. Even 61% of current smokers did not support outdoor advertising at these locations.

Residents were somewhat permissive of indoor advertising at gas stations and convenience stores.

Figure 3 summarizes resident attitudes toward indoor advertising at gas stations and convenience stores. Overall, residents were more permissive of indoor advertising

Figure 3. Support for interior advertising in gas stations and convenience stores

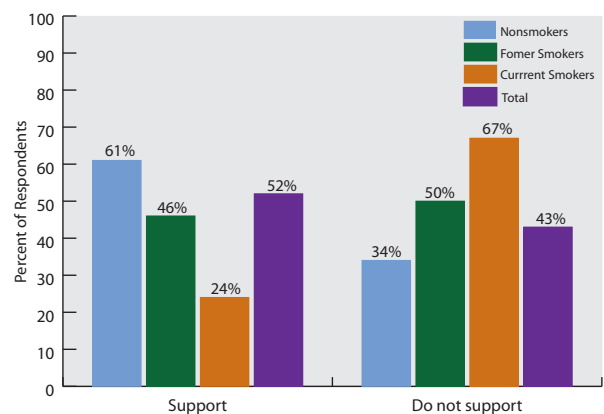


compared to outdoor advertising in these locations. However, former and current smokers were more likely than nonsmokers to support such advertising.

Retailer Licensing

Residents supported a limit on tobacco retailer licenses in the area.

Figure 4. Support for policies restricting retailer licensure



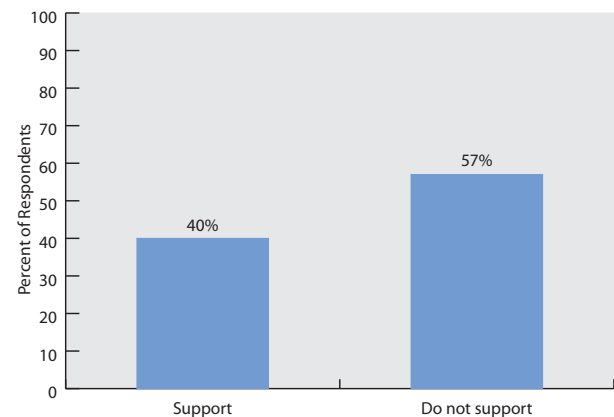
Overall, most residents (52%) supported restricting tobacco retailer licenses. Smoking status influenced attitudes, with 61% of nonsmokers supporting a limit on the number of tobacco licenses compared to 46% of former smokers and 24% of current smokers (Figure 4).

Graphic Warning Signs

Residents did not support requiring tobacco retailers to post graphic warning signs.

Figure 5 shows there was not broad support for requiring retailers to post graphic warning signs. Smoking status did not influence opinions.

Figure 5. Support for policies requiring graphic warning signs



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the POS Community Support Survey, **options to consider when developing effective policy interventions are:**

1. Educate the community regarding the consequences of tobacco advertising and promotion through media and other advocacy.

Education can increase the acceptance of policies that restrict tobacco advertising in all types of stores and community support for graphic warning policies.

2. Enact policies to eliminate sales in well-known chain grocery stores and pharmacies.

Policymakers should be made aware of residents' support for restricting tobacco advertising in these types of retail outlets and focus on these outlets for policy intervention.

3. Target tobacco advertising in convenience stores and gas stations that can be seen from the roadside near schools, playgrounds, and daycares.

Residents did not support outdoor tobacco advertising, especially near schools, playgrounds, and daycare facilities, making these outlets a potential starting point for policy intervention if a county-wide policy is not being considered.

4. Work to limit tobacco licensing.

Residents agreed that licensing for tobacco sales should be restricted in their communities. Limited licensing may result in: 1. Reducing the number and density of tobacco retailers; 2. Restricting the location of tobacco retailers (*e.g.*, near youth facilities, in commercial districts); 3. Restricting the type of retailers that sell tobacco (*e.g.*, pharmacies, college campus stores); and 4. Limiting the hours or days tobacco products can be sold (*e.g.*, hours when children are likely to be present). Possible methods for reducing tobacco licenses include: 1. State or local jurisdiction to limit the licenses provided and/or impose a licensing fee; 2. Zoning restrictions; and 3. Conditional use permits.

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