



PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
300 N. San Antonio Road • Santa Barbara, CA 93110
(805) 681-5102 • FAX (805) 681-5191
www.countyofsb.org

P R E S S R E L E A S E

News Media Contact:

Susan Klein-Rothschild
Public Information Officer
(805) 681-5435
(805) 896-1057 (cell)
sklein@sbcphd.org

August 16, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Dawn M. Dunn
(805) 681-5407

Cigarettes Sold to Minors in Several Local Cities

Santa Barbara County Public Health and Sheriff's Departments recently completed undercover operations to assess sales of tobacco products to minors (youth under the age of 18). Of the 276 tobacco retailers surveyed in Santa Barbara County, 17% (48 out of 276) sold cigarettes to an underage decoy. It is illegal to sell tobacco products to minors under the age of 18.

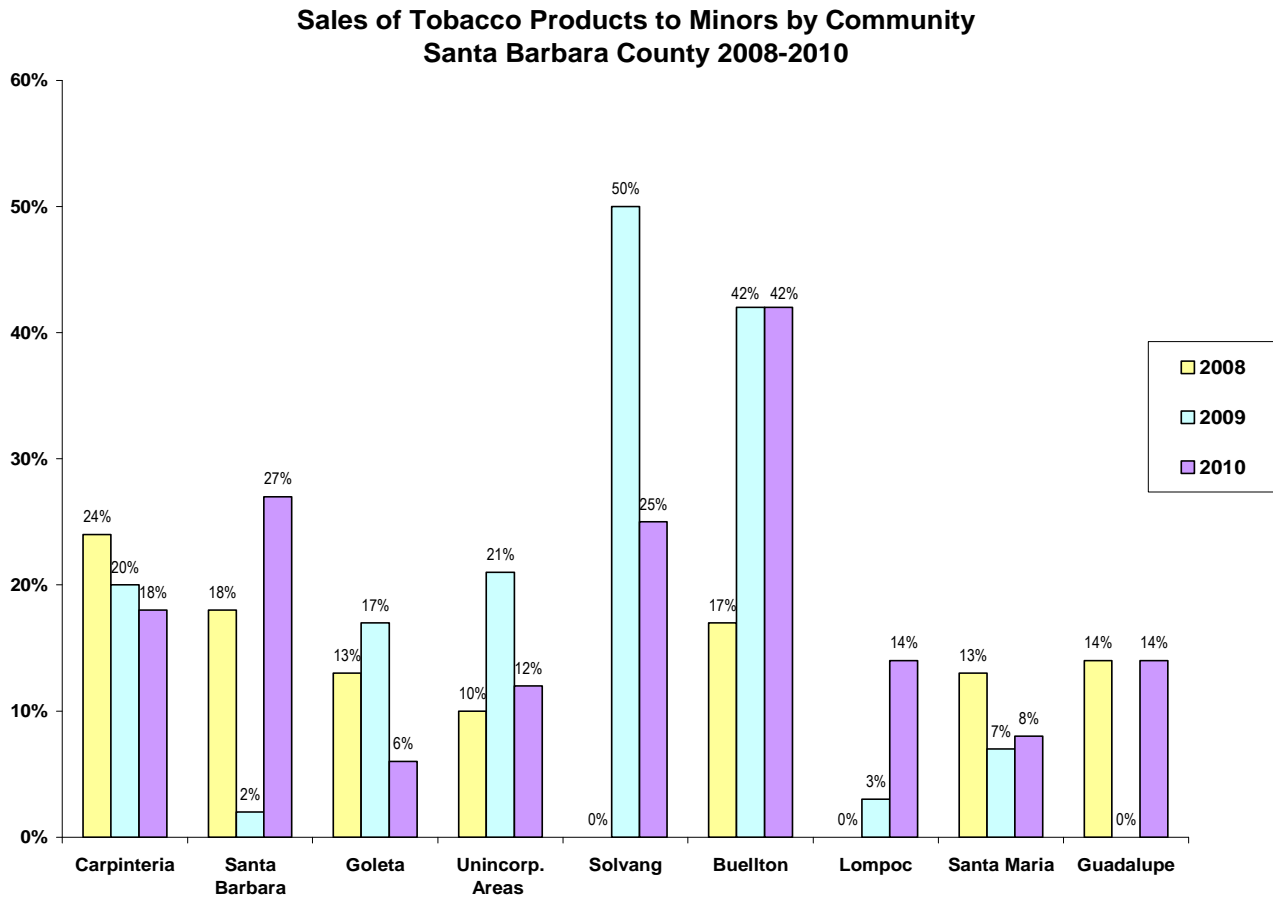
"The fact that 17% of tobacco retailers in our County sold tobacco to youth indicates a continued focus on prohibiting sales to minors is needed", said Dr. Takashi Wada, County Health Officer. "Tobacco use is a major health threat. Ensuring tobacco retailers comply with the law against sales to minors is important to protecting the health of our young people" said Dr. Wada.

The percent of retailers that sold tobacco to minors varies by city within the county. Buellton had the highest rate of illegal sales to minors at 42% (5 out of 12). Rates for others areas are as follows:

- Santa Barbara: 27% (21 out of 78).
- Solvang: 25% (1 out of 4)
- Carpinteria: 18% (3 out of 17)
- Lompoc: 14% (4 out of 29)
- Guadalupe: 14% (1 out of 7)
- Santa Maria: 8% (3 out of 37)
- Goleta: 6% (2 out of 33)
- Unincorporated county: (7 out of 59).

-MORE-

The chart below shows the sales rates to underage minors for the past 3 years by city.



In order to decrease the illegal sale of tobacco to minors, over 78 communities in California have enacted strong tobacco retailing policies, in which tobacco retailers pay an annual fee for a license to sell tobacco. These policies have been proven to lower illegal sales rates throughout the state.

Santa Barbara County and the cities of Santa Barbara and Goleta currently have tobacco retail licensing policies. “These local policies have definitely made a difference however, they were passed almost 10 years ago and could be more effective if they were updated”, notes Dawn Dunn, Tobacco Program Administrator. “We are looking at updating the County tobacco licensing policy to further reduce sales to minors”, she added.

For more information about youth access to tobacco products or tobacco retail licensing, please contact Dawn M. Dunn, Tobacco Prevention Settlement Program Administrator at 681-5407 or Dawn.Dunn@sbcphd.org.

