



News Release

**Thurston County
Public Health and
Social Services**

412 Lilly Road, NE
Olympia, WA 98506

Creating Solutions for Our Future

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Several Thurston County Retailers Sell Cigarettes to Minors

OLYMPIA -- Thurston County Public Health & Social Services (TCPHSS) has recently conducted federally mandated Synar tobacco compliance checks at 26 tobacco retailers around Thurston County, which resulted in a 73% compliance rate. Out of 26 retailers, 7 were found to be in violation of the Youth Access Law:

Fraternal Order of Eagles Prairie Aerie #4144 – 11609 Koeppen Rd SE, Yelm

Rainier Chevron – 16518 Yelm Ave SE, Yelm

Olympia Alano Club – 310 E. 4th Ave, Olympia

Melody Food Mart – 415 Cleveland Ave SE, Tumwater

Olympia Chevron – 2601 Yelm Hwy SE, Olympia

Tenino Corner Grocery – 319 S. Wichman St., Tenino

Arco AM/PM Mini Market – 402 Sleater-Kinney Rd SE, Lacey

In addition to Synar tobacco compliance checks, Thurston County Public Health & Social Services also conducted an additional 50 random compliance checks, which resulted in 4 retailer violations:

The Evergreen State College – 2700 Evergreen Parkway, Olympia

7-Eleven – 1022 Crosby Blvd SW, Tumwater

Parks Place – 608 Yelm Hwy, Yelm

Whistle Stop – 12745 Old Highway 99 SE, Tenino

In 1993, the Washington State Legislature passed the Youth Access Law to reduce the illegal sale of tobacco to Washington youth under the age of 18, due to a new federal law, the Synar Amendment. The Synar law was passed in order to hold states accountable for reducing tobacco sales to minors. States who do not meet the 80% compliance rate each year lose federal grant dollars. Thurston County and other counties around the state conduct compliance checks on tobacco retailers in efforts to enforce this law.

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Though Washington State has always met the 80% compliance rate, this has not always been the case for Thurston County. Since 2006, there has been a steady increase of tobacco sales to minors. "Much more needs to be done in Thurston County in regards to retailer education. All clerks at establishments that sell tobacco must know to check ID every time and be aware of the consequences of selling tobacco to a minor," says Jamilia Sherls, Tobacco Prevention and Control Coordinator at Thurston County Public Health & Social Services. Both tobacco retail clerks and shop owners are fined when they are non-compliant with the Youth Access Law. In addition, the store's tobacco license may be suspended if they continue to violate the law. Being informed of the law and correct ways to comply are the keys for retailers to avoid penalties.

Starting July 1st, 2009, TOGETHER!, in conjunction with the Washington State Liquor Control Board, will be conducting tobacco compliance checks in Thurston County. TOGETHER! has been a community partner in tobacco prevention and control for years and is dedicated to youth tobacco, alcohol, and drug prevention. They will be working with retailers to stop tobacco sales to minors in Thurston County. "TCPHSS and TOGETHER! have determined that efforts to assess the availability of tobacco to youth and reduce youth access to tobacco were in alignment with TOGETHER!'s mission and scope of work," says Mary Segawa, Executive Director at TOGETHER!. "We will be strengthening our collaboration with TOGETHER! in efforts to prevent youth initiation of tobacco products," says Dr. Diana Yu, Thurston County Health Officer. "People who use tobacco products are more likely to develop chronic health conditions and die pre-maturely. We want our youth to grow into healthy, tobacco-free adults."

If you work for a tobacco retailer and would like more information on the Youth Access Law or how to correctly check ID, please contact Meghan Sullivan, TOGETHER! Program Manager, at 493-2230 ext. 19 or the Washington State Liquor Control Board. For questions about this release, contact Jamilia Sherls at 786-5581 x1-6966#.