



STATE OF MARYLAND

# DHMH PRESS RELEASE

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## Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

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## Fact Sheet: Illegal Youth Access to Tobacco in Maryland

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It is against Maryland state and federal law to sell tobacco products to youth under 18 years of age. Maryland retailers routinely violate this law.

### **About 1 of 4 Maryland licensed retailers illegally sells tobacco to underage youth**

- In inspections conducted October 2012-September 2013, **24.1 percent of Maryland tobacco retailers sold cigarettes to underage youth.**<sup>1</sup> Maryland is anticipated to be the only state in the nation with a violation rate over 20 percent for this time period.
- In May-September 2014, the **non-compliance rate for Maryland retailers increased to 31.9 percent**, with one jurisdiction as high as 54.7 percent.<sup>2</sup>
- Separate inspections conducted under different methods by the Food and Drug Administration most recently found a non-compliance rate of 23.8 percent among Maryland retailers.

### **Maryland Youth Say it is Easy to Buy Tobacco**

- Among Maryland underage students who smoked on at least 20 of the past 30 days, **26.4 percent reported that they usually bought their own cigarettes** from a gas station, convenience or other store.
- Among all students under 18 who reported current smoking and purchasing their cigarettes from a retail outlet during the previous 30 days, **only 37.5 percent of those attempting to purchase cigarettes were asked to show photo identification.**

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Synar Amendment inspections, data anticipated to be published in FFY 2014 report, June 2015

<sup>2</sup> Preliminary Federal Synar Amendment inspections, data anticipated to be published in FFY 2015 report, June 2016

- **When not asked to show photo identification, 78.7 percent of the underage youth reported being successful in their purchase of cigarettes.**
- Only two states in the nation (out of 28 surveyed) had rates higher than Maryland of underage smokers obtaining their own cigarettes in a store or gas station.

Nearly all smokers in Maryland begin tobacco use when they are under the age of 18. The access to this deadly product that is illegal to be sold to minors often leads to a lifelong addiction to nicotine for these youth.

**County-Level Tobacco Retailer Violation Rates by Inspection Type and Year**

**FFY2014 Synar Report, FFY 2015 Synar Report, FFY 2014 FDA\***

<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>FFY 2014 Synar Report Violation Rate</b>	<b>Number of facilities Inspected</b>
Caroline	50.0%	4
Somerset	50.0%	2
Baltimore Co.	40.0%	91
Prince George's	30.6%	99
Baltimore City	25.9%	177
Talbot	25.0%	5
Cecil	27.3%	14
Worcester	25.0%	21
Charles	23.1%	16
Anne Arundel	20.8%	62
Howard	20.6%	42
Montgomery	16.2%	75
Washington	15.4%	13
Harford	15.0%	21
Calvert	14.3%	7
Dorchester	14.3%	7
Frederick	11.1%	20
Wicomico	8.3%	15
Queen Anne's	7.7%	13
Carroll	7.1%	14
Allegany	0.0%	6
Garrett	0.0%	5
Kent	0.0%	4
St. Mary's	0.0%	11
<b>Maryland</b>	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>744</b>