



TO: Missy Gallegos, Public Health Muskegon County
Jen Hansen, District #10 Health Department
Heidi Denton, Allegan County Community Mental Health Services
Tim Findlay, Ottawa County Department of Public Health

CC: Jill Montgomery-Keast, Public Health Muskegon County
Becky Young, Ottawa County Health Department
Sally Beyer, Allegan County Community Mental Health Services

FROM: Stephanie VanDerKooi, Prevention Coordinator

SUBJECT: Formal Synar FY 14/15

DATE: May 15, 2015

It is once again time to conduct a statewide compliance check assessment of tobacco retailers to determine their compliance with Michigan's Youth Tobacco Act (YTA). As you know, this survey is mandated by the requirements of the Federal Synar amendment.

All synar checks must be completed by June 30, 2015 and may begin no earlier than June 1, 2015. All forms and the compliance check results database must be received by the LRP **no later than July 8, 2015**.

Background Information

This project is part of a larger effort to determine the successful sales rates of tobacco products to minors (under age 18) as part of Michigan's compliance with the Synar amendment. Failure to complete this project, and complete it successfully, may result in significant loss of federal dollars for substance abuse prevention and treatment in Michigan.

The outlets selected for this survey will not be prosecuted during the formal Synar survey process. Because no purchase will actually take place, there will be no legal or administrative consequences or liability for the teens, chaperones, or retailer.

The information obtained from these surveys is for statistical purposes only. This does not preclude, however, follow-up activity in the form of education and/or additional compliance checks beginning on July 1, 2015. Eventually, the statewide results (without retailer identification) will be published to increase community awareness and to encourage retailer compliance with the Youth Tobacco Act. The data may also be used to stress the importance of the need for statewide enforcement of the Youth Tobacco Act with appropriate law enforcement personnel.



Instructions:

The survey involves visiting the outlets randomly selected by OROSC that sell tobacco products over the-counter. The youth inspector will enter the outlet, attempt to make a tobacco purchase, and record the results. The adult chaperone will need to drive the youth inspectors and oversee the purchase attempts.

If a compliance check cannot be done at a selected outlet, fill out the reason on the compliance check report form, and proceed to the next outlet on the sampling list. All forms must be *completed to the fullest extent possible*, and the original submitted to the state at the completion of the compliance check process.

Sixteen and **seventeen** year old teens can be recruited for this project as youth inspectors. Any compliance checks conducted with youth outside this age range will need to be redone. Teens selected, as youth inspectors, should look their age, be emotionally mature and their racial/ethnic characteristics should be consistent with the community in which you are conducting the compliance checks. Parental permission is **required** for a teen to participate as a youth inspector. Please be sure that the parent or guardian of the teen signs a permission slip, which includes a release of liability statement.

An adult chaperone **must** accompany each youth inspector and witness the attempted tobacco purchase. Male chaperones should be paired with male teens and female chaperones should be paired with female teens. Ideally, two or more teens should be on a team.

Criteria of an adult chaperone are: trained as to their roles and responsibilities as a chaperone, good driving record, current driver's license, proof of vehicle insurance and a willingness to give encouragement and support to the youth inspector during the attempted buy.

Confidence is the key to a youth inspector successfully conducting a compliance check/making an attempted tobacco purchase. Emphasize that the ultimate goal is for outlets to stop providing cigarettes to children when instructing the youth inspector. Make it clear that if a clerk asks them for identification, or refuses to sell tobacco products it represents success on the part of the vendor, not failure on the part of the youth inspector.

Additional information

Please remember that you must notify local law enforcement that compliance checks will be conducted.

When completing the Compliance Check Reporting form please leave the youth and chaperone ID numbers **blank**, LRP will assign and enter these IDs once all forms are received.

Compliance check results need to be entered into the Lakeshore Regional Partners Compliance Check Results Spreadsheet under the appropriate county tab. This spreadsheet has been



provided as an attachment to the email communication along with instructions. Send the completed spreadsheet to Stephanie at stephaniev@lsre.org

Mail the **original** Compliance Check Reporting Forms to:

Stephanie VanDerKooi
Lakeshore Regional Partners
376 E. Apple Ave.
Muskegon MI 49442

The following items are attached to this communication:

- Synar Compliance Check Results Spreadsheet/List: An excel document where you will enter the results of the Synar compliance checks, as well as your list of retailers selected to receive a compliance check. Each county has its own worksheet tab.
- Synar Sample Mailing Labels: Printable labels for each selected retailer designed to fit on the compliance check form (5160 Avery Label)
- Instructions for completing the Synar Compliance Check Results Spreadsheet
- Overview for how to conduct Synar checks

The following additional items from MDCH can be accessed at:

<http://www.michigan.gov/yatsynar>

- Instructions for Completing the Compliance Check Reporting Form
- Specific Procedures for Retailer and Vending Machine Comp. Checks
- Instructions
 - Instructions for Chaperones Retailer CC
 - Instructions for Chaperones Vending Machine CC
 - Instructions for Youth Inspectors on Retailer CC
 - Instructions for Youth Inspectors on Vending Machine CC
- Samples
 - Sample Letter to Parents
 - Sample Permission Slip to Participate in Synar

Thank you for your time and support in this endeavor! Please feel free to contact me at 616-283-6150 or by email at stephaniev@lsre.org with any questions.